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THE FASTEST GROWING CHURCH IN THE WORLD

by Brother Keith E. L'Hommedieu, D.D.

It's quite safe to say that of all the organized religious sects on the current scene, one church in particular stands above all in its unique approach to religion. The Universal Life Church is the only organized church in the world with no traditional religious doctrine. In the words of Kirby J. Hensley, founder, "The ULC only believes in what is right, and that all people have the right to determine what beliefs are right for them, as long as they do not interfere with the rights of others."

Reverend Hensley is the leader of the worldwide Universal Life Church with a membership now exceeding 7 million ordained ministers of all religious beliefs. Reverend Hensley started the church in his garage by ordaining ministers by mail. During the 1960's, he traveled all across the country appearing at college rallies held in his honor where he would perform mass ordinations of thousands of people at a time. These new ministers were then exempt from being inducted into the armed forces during the undeclared Vietnam war.

In 1966 Reverend Hensley was fighting the establishment on another front. The IRS tried to claim the ULC wasn't a legal church and proceeded to impound the ten thousand dollars in the church bank account. The feisty Hensley filed suit against the IRS in federal district court for return of the funds and to permanently establish the ULC as a legal tax exempt entity. On March 1, 1974 Judge James F. Battin ruled against the IRS in his decision which stated, "Neither this court or any branch of this government will consider the merits or failacies of a religion. Nor will the court praise or condemn a religion. Were the court to do so, it would impinge upon the guarantees of the First Amendment." The judge then ordered the IRS to return the impounded money and to grant the Universal Life Church its tax exempt status.

Reverend Hensley has stated that he believes a church is people and not just a fancy building. He also believes in total freedom and equality for all people. The ULC will ordain anyone without regard to religious beliefs, race, nationality, sex or age.

The ULC's success formula is both effective and unquestionably legal. After a person has become an ordained minister, he or she can join with two other people and form their own Universal Life Church. These three people then make up the Board of Directors consisting of a Pastor, a Secretary and a Treasurer. The ULC will then grant the group the use of its legal church charter complete with both federal and state tax exempt numbers. The newly formed church may then open a bank account in the church's name. Any member of the church can legally donate up to 50% of his or her outside income to the church and take a corresponding tax deduction. The church in turn can pay the complete housing cost of its minister including rent or mortgage payment, insurance, taxes, furnishings and repairs. The church can also provide the minister with full use of an automobile as well as pay for travel and educational expenses. None of these expenses are reported as income to the IRS. Recently a whole town in Hardenburg, New York became Universal Life ministers and turned their homes into religious retreats and monasteries thereby relieving themselves of property taxes, at least until the state tries to figure out what to do.

Brother L'Hommedieu is Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Sacerdotal Order of the Universal Life and serves on the Board of Directors of the International Universal Life Church, Inc.

Churches enjoy certain other tax benefits over the common man on the street. For instance, a church can legally buy and sell real estate or stocks and bonds completely tax free. It can receive tax free income from bank deposits or mortgages. Many churches own large publishing, recording, or other related businesses like hospitals, clinics and schools without paying any income tax.

A church can sponsor any kind of fund raising event such as a concert, play or even bingo. Churches are also exempt from paying inheritance taxes. When the pastor of the church dies, the Board of Directors simply appoints a new pastor and the church goes on.

Reverend Hensley has stated that he personally doesn't believe in the tax exempt status of churches. However, if the government is going to give a free ride to Billy Graham and the Pope, then why not let everybody participate in these blessings. Furthermore, he backs his words up by offering to defend in court the tax exempt status of his congregations.

Since the church was founded in 1962, it has attracted members who are movie and TV personalities, businessmen, government officials, lawyers, and doctors as well as all types of regular working people. During the last 15 years the Universal Life church has blossomed into a full blown grass roots populace movement. Reverend Hensley is ordaining ten thousand new ministers a week and predicts that the church will have over 20,000,000 members by the early 1980's. In addition, requests for interviews and TV appearances continue to pour in.

Anyone who is a member of the ULC will tell you that the ULC is destined to change the world. By unifying mankind into a brotherhood of freedom orientated individuals, each respecting the other's right to live life as they see fit, the Universal Life Church hopes to put an end to all wars. Reverend Hensley admits that this is a pretty monumental task to accomplish, but he also points out that he is already well on the way to reaching his goal.

Rev. Hensley invites all those interested in becoming an ordained minister and receiving complete information and Minister's Credentials, to send a 10^{00} tax deductible donation to the Universal Life Church, 1335 Seabright Ave., Dept. **808**, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

The Overlooked Solution

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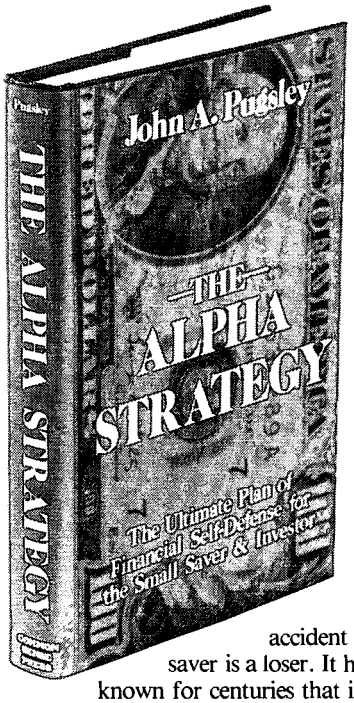
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John A. Pugsley is author of ***Common Sense Economics: Your Money—What It Is and How to Keep It,*** a 150,000-copy bestseller that has guided tens of thousands of professionals and executives through the turbulent markets of the 1970s. He is editor of the renowned financial newsletter ***Common Sense Viewpoint,*** which has thousands of subscribers here and abroad.

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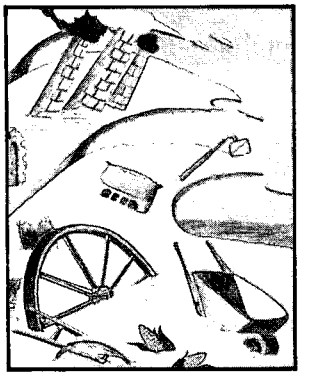

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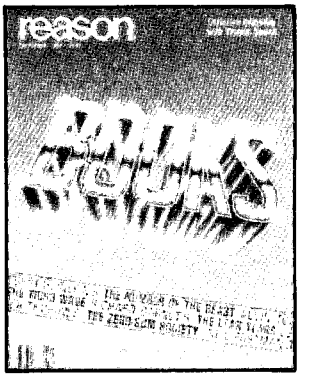

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The creeping shadow...

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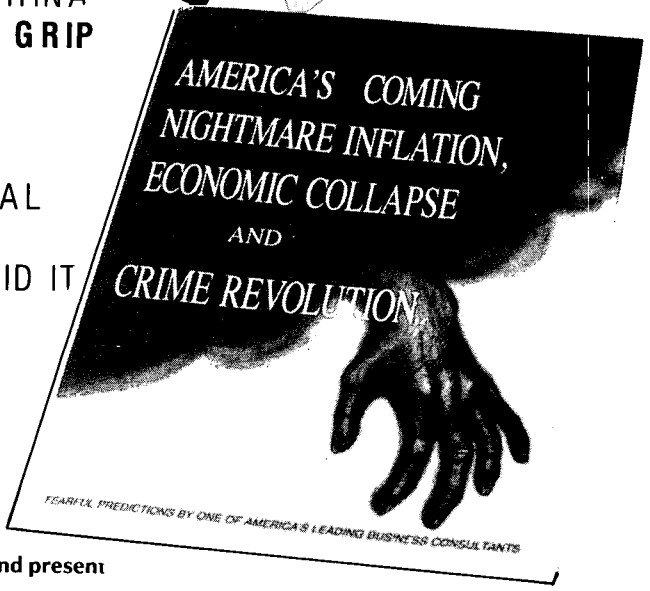
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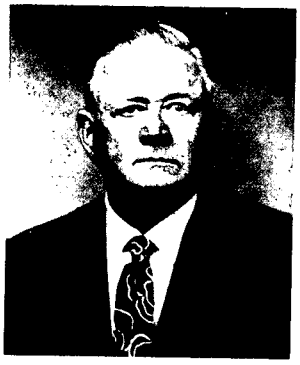
FEARFUL PREDICTIONS BY ONE OF AMERICA'S LEADING BUSINESS CONSULTANTS



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MAKE MORE MONEY . . . . . AND KEEP IT

Using Offshore Banking and Trusts.

Dear Friend,

Every year, every month, your money buys less. When you do make a profit, the government grabs the lions share. Rampant inflation exists side-by-side with recession. Governments who can't control their own bureaucracy try to monitor and control every facit of their individual citizens' lives. You worry about how to provide for your family, today and tomorrow.

What is the answer? How can we control our lives and our assets? I believe the best solution is to adopt an international financial approach, with confidential transactions, diversification into hard assets and currencies and avoidence of taxes wherever possible. You don't have to be a Rockefeller to do this. Even a person of moderate means can reap the benefits enjoyed by wealthy individuals and multinational corporations. It is simple once you know their secrets.

I learned these techniques the hard way. I have set up an offshore bank and have prospered in spite of U.S. government bureaucrats. My associates and I believe that you should know the alternatives available that can enable you to control your financial life. There is some literature available on the philosophy of privacy, internationalism and hard assets, but we found very little explaining actual techniques and examples. We wrote **How to Profit from Offshore Banking** and **Anyone can Profit With a Secret Foreign Trust** to fill that gap with information not available anywhere else—case histories, forms, contracts, and step-by-step instructions.

You owe it to yourself and your family to read these books. If you use the ideas presented you *will* protect and increase your assets. If you don't use them you will have, at least, made a decision based on knowledge of all the alternatives.

We guarantee that you will find value in **How to Profit from Offshore Banking** and **Anyone Can Profit With a Secret Foreign Trust.** If you don't, just send the book back for a full refund. We don't think you will want to.

Yours faithfully,

Alex Laurins

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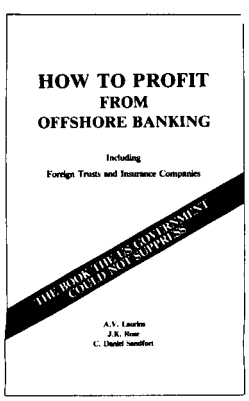

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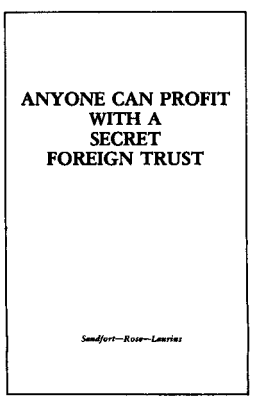

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editor's notes

• **BUSY EDITORS.** The editors of REASON continue their hectic pace of speaking and writing. Messrs. Klausner, Machan, and Poole attended the biennial general meeting of the Mont Pelerin Society in September (see p. 58), where they met with advocates of liberty from around the world.

Senior editor Tibor Machan had just returned from Austria, where he presented a paper at the Fifth Wittgenstein Symposium. His Op-Ed page article on the Polovchak case (the boy who refused to return with his parents to the USSR) appeared in the *New York Times* on August 28 and received notice as far away as Paris (where *Le Figaro* quoted from it on September 9). Machan has been tapped as editor of a book called *The Libertarian Reader,* a collection due out in 1981 from Rowman & Littlefield. And he has had papers accepted recently by two philosophical journals, *American Philosophical Quarterly* (on natural rights) and *Theory and Decision* (on rational choice and public affairs). And his piece on the police power will appear in the December issue of *The Freeman.*

Editor-in-chief Poole, meanwhile, has written two analyses of rent control for the Santa Barbara-based Community Research Council. He has also recently completed a study of federal urban and regional development programs as part of a Heritage Foundation study to develop an alternative federal budget. On October 14, he appeared in Louisville, Kentucky, to address the Governor's Conference on Local Government on the topic of privatization of public services. He is also contributing to a monograph on that topic, as applied to energy boom towns, for the Center for Political Economy and Natural Resources at Montana State University.

• **ARTICLE IMPACT.** As a result of the government investigation confirming REASON's charges of misuse of federal funds by the United Farmworkers Union (see Editor's Notes, Oct.), REASON author Patty Newman appeared for a second time on Chicago radio station WIND's Clark Weber program, this time on September 10. Newman spent 45 minutes reviewing the story and answering questions from listeners.

Another REASON article is going overseas, reprinted by the US government's International Communication Agency. It is Lawrence Chickering's "The Two Faces of Capitalism," published in our September issue. ICA monitors REASON on a regular basis and periodically requests permission to reprint articles for its overseas information program, in both English and other languages.

• **TMI UPDATE.** A news release on our article on the human factors problems that led to the Three Mile Island accident ("Who Caused Three Mile Island?" Aug.) was picked up and distributed around the country by Zodiac News Service. In addition, an article confirming many of author Adam Reed's charges appeared in a recent issue of *Control Engineering.*

• **CORRECTION.** An error crept into the sidebar on building codes in our October issue (p. 22). In the list of codes, only three were listed, with the third mistakenly credited to the International Conference of Building Officials. In fact, the Southern Standard Building Code is produced by the Southern Building Code Congress, and the ICBO authors the fourth code, the Uniform Building Code. We regret the error.

• **PROPERTY EXPLORATIONS.** Why are there no property rights in such things as seabed minerals, radio and TV frequencies, underground bodies of water, and the like? How should such rights be defined? And what would be the benefits of doing so? The Reason Foundation is hosting a Liberty Fund colloquium November 20-22 to explore such questions. Scholars from across the country will gather in Santa Barbara for three days of exploratory discussions. Watch this column for further details.

• **DISSIDENT VOICES.** An important new publication has crossed our desks. Called *Freedom Appeals,* it consists largely of translations of the writings of dissidents in repressive countries, both Communist and non-Communist. Issue No. 3 includes a letter of endorsement from Soviet dissident Alexander Ginsberg. The magazine is published monthly by Freedom House, the widely respected organization that publishes an annual index of the extent of freedom in countries around the world. Subscriptions are $15 for individuals, $20 for institutions (Freedom House, 20 W. 40th St., New York, NY 10018).

—R. P.

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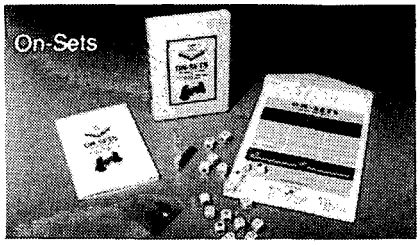

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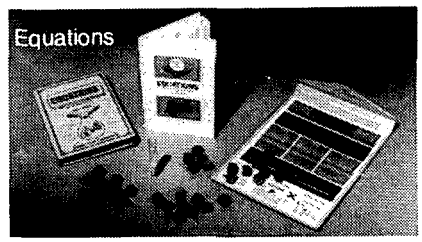

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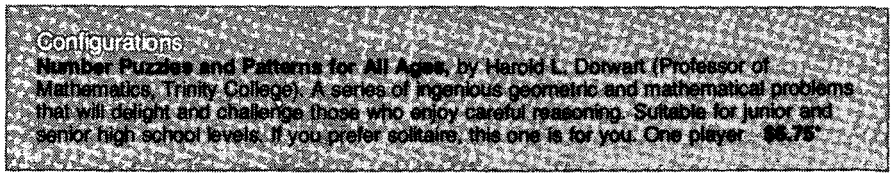
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On Reclaiming Liberty

editorial

There is little point in looking to the moral regeneration of either politicians or ourselves for a solution . . . . We shall do far better to seek a change in our effective political constitution.

— Milton Friedman, *Newsweek,* June 23, 1980

In a recent review of Rose and Milton Friedman's *Free to Choose* in the *Harvard Business Review,* Christine and John Hekman acknowledge agreement with the Friedmans on substance. But they pose a challenging question: though the book "suggests constitutional changes that would guarantee a free market economy by restricting the freedom of politicians to legislate in certain areas," the Friedmans fail to tell us, say the Hekmans, "how to ensure enactment of the new rules—who must pay and what is their price?"

The basic problem is, of course, not new. All would-be political reformers face what Lenin encapsulated in the famous question, "What is to be done?" Individualists differ from all varieties of statists in insisting that, whatever the solution, it must in principle be voluntary. But nothing more specific than that follows from the individualist stance itself. The goal of liberty does not tell us what to work for as a means of achieving it—constitutional reform? agency-by-agency deregulation? privatization of government services? electing liberty-minded people to office? Nor does it dictate the means of achieving such subsidiary aims—grass-roots consciousness raising? working through established parties? starting a new party? intellectual lobbying of the thinkers and movers? paying people off?

Once before a REASON editorial was addressed to this problem. In January 1972 we commented on the conclusion of a free-market economist that, in terms of time allocation, it would be more cost-effective for the professionally active population to stay away from politics than to get involved. The problem with this advice is that political decisions are thus left to the very people who would impose their will on others rather than to those who like to carry on free of coercive intervention. It is true enough, as we pointed out in 1972, that specific recommendations for political involvement are presumptuous. Yet we insisted that all rational people owe it to themselves to investigate how best, in their own individual circumstances, to keep their freedom at least a little longer, if not actually advance it.

Given the rate at which ideas can be expected to travel through a culture that has fed on opposite ideas for more than a hundred years, considerable progress has been made since 1972. Two free-market economists have received the Nobel Prize. A Harvard University philosopher has published an award-winning, impressive book arguing for libertarianism. Several others have produced academic and popular articles and books discussing various aspects of the free society. The Libertarian Party has been launched and has experienced some success. Something of a tax revolt has started, deregulation has commenced on several fronts, and free-market think tanks have been established. Much more could be cited as evidence that freedom, especially as an alternative ideal, is not in such bad shape as it was when we provided some advice on how to advance it back in 1972.

More is required, of course, yet it is not simple to specify just what. In general terms, the correct response to tyranny, however meager or massive it happens to be, is for individuals to make the personal effort to figure out how to combat it and to do so on whatever front they have the best opportunity. Some of us should try for constitutional reform, some for educational vouchers, some for privatizing public parks, some for debunking the arguments of statists, some for freeing up cities that suffer from the iron grip of rent control; some should even join government to give some decent advice to insiders who see that something is terribly wrong. These and thousands of other individualized ways are the means by which to change our society from semi-slave to free. There is no magic key that will open the doors of liberty, no formula for liberation. It is the responsibility of each of us to find suitable battlegrounds and suitable tactics.

For those who recognize the superiority of the free market, with its many benefits because of the possibility of trading for what we value, it may seem that the natural route to liberty is to *pay off* the beneficiaries of government intervention. Yet to think that this is the magic solution is to assume that people actually benefit more from government intervention than from a free market. Very few do, when we consider what could be available to people without such intervention. Haven't we learned from Milton Friedman and his economist peers that the free market handles problems better, in general, than governments do? Moreover, Mr. Friedman's suggested reforms clearly require more than pay-offs. Some people—many people—will have to change their *minds* before the liberating recommendations he makes will be instituted.

If we are to progress very far toward a restoration of the American ideal, the power of ideas must be accepted. So also, the value of presenting examples, providing historical clarifications, and in general carrying on successfully as advocates, practitioners, admirers, and students of the free society. If liberty carries a price tag, it is, as that old slogan has it, eternal vigilance.

Tibor R. Machan

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letters

Kudos

Congratulations on your excellent August issue. I especially liked the Adam Reed article on Three Mile Island and John McClaughry's book review of *New Age Politics.*

David R. Henderson
Department of Economics
University of Santa Clara
Santa Clara, CA

Nuclear News

Adam Reed's article in the August issue was excellent. It combined the suspense of a detective story with a new perspective on the nuclear industry (new to those of us who are not experts).

Fred Schnaubelt
City Councilman
San Diego, CA

Some Independence

Why is it that John Anderson has become the television media's choice for "independent" candidate, and Ed Clark, who is a true "independent," is relegated to polite obscurity (that is, ignored by the commentators)? If one looks at the backgrounds of the two non-major party candidates, the only obscure difference, aside from ideological, is that Mr. Anderson is or has been a member of Mr. David Rockefeller's subrosa organization, the Trilateral Commission. This is a fact which Mr. Anderson has tried to downplay. Since membership in that organization is by invitation only, it must be surmised that Mr. Rockefeller operates a charm school of inestimable success. How else could such a marginal candidate as Mr. Anderson, a man of few ideas, achieve such widespread media credibility and acceptance?

I don't wish to imply that the news networks are orchestrated by the Trilateral Commission; however, don't the facts suggest an investigative look-see into the formula for success? The results could be interesting and informative.

Raul R. Romandia
Sparks, NV

Don't Trust Antitrusters

Arthur Shenfield's "Antitrust: Free-Market Dilemma" (Sept.) is excellent, but Mr. Shenfield underestimates the enemy. After establishing that the antitrust laws are illogical and counterproductive, he lets the politicians and bureaucrats off the hook by assuming they enact and enforce those laws out of ignorance or stupidity. How could a top-level politician or bureaucrat have worked his way into a position of power if he was unintelligent? Make no mistake about it, our rulers are not dimwits. They know exactly what they are doing. They are not passing these laws to control monopolies, as Mr. Shenfield

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assumes. They are doing it to acquire power. Their antitrust arguments are just smoke—camouflage to mask their real intentions.

I'd like to see writers who expose the irrationality of government controls take their analyses just one step further by asking, If the controls are indeed counterproductive, then why do they still exist? I think the answer will be found in Thomas Jefferson's remark: "An honest man can feel no pleasure in the exercise of power over his fellow citizens." But a dishonest man...

Rick Maybury
Roseville, CA

Wilderness Rights

I very much enjoy reading the different opinions in your magazine; it has sparked much thought on my part. While many topics are easily identified as either libertarian or not, there are some that seem to defy classification, for example, nuclear power, waste disposal, and off-road vehicles. It is this last subject that concerns me most at the moment. In the September issue there was an article by M.D. Isely. This article about ORVs makes some pretty amazing statements about the effects of this particular "sport." No one who lives near an area that has been blessed with these "sportsmen" can deny there have been drastic changes in the landscape since their arrival.

I can testify to this from first-hand experience; several years ago I enjoyed the quietness and aesthetic, ecological, and wildlife interest of a 600-acre tract of land behind my house. That was before the ORVs discovered it and quickly reduced it to a single-use area, whereas it used to support many uses simultaneously (i.e., hiking, horseback riding, bird hunting, fishing, and just plain sitting and looking off into the distance).

This seems to be the crux of the matter: does one person on a trail bike have the right to disrupt any number of other less noisy and destructive people? One may cloud the issue by dragging the BLM into it and saying, "Look here, the government is trying to ace me out of something again." This is irrational reasoning, for it implies that any action that the government may not like is correct on its face, ipso facto. If these dirt bike and dune buggy libertarians are truly allowed to use the desert, the wilderness, etc., as they see fit, we have in our midst the immediate seeds of our destruction as a whole; people who wish to live in freedom can support only so many who refuse to grow up, for that is what most of these people are: perennial juveniles who care nothing for other people's rights or the rights of our own mother earth.

J. Charles Williams
Vista, CA

The editors reply: Off-road vehicle users have undoubtedly had different effects in different areas. Mr. Isely described his own first-hand experience and suggested that the proposal of the Bureau of Land Management to prevent *any* vehicle access to large parts of the desert wilderness is both unnecessary—because much of that area is not even suitable for ORVs—and discriminatory, preventing enjoyment and use the area by anyone without the means or the time to travel by horse or on foot. The point of "dragging the BLM into the issue" is to show the inherent difficulties of rational management of resources that everyone has a right to because everyone owns them. If Mr. Williams owned the 600-acre tract behind his house, the rights to its use would of course be much clearer. He could prevent the uses he finds objectionable and, because it would be *his* and not *everyone's,* would not have to attempt to balance the uses of all comers. Wouldn't a system of private property, where ORV users would have to own or

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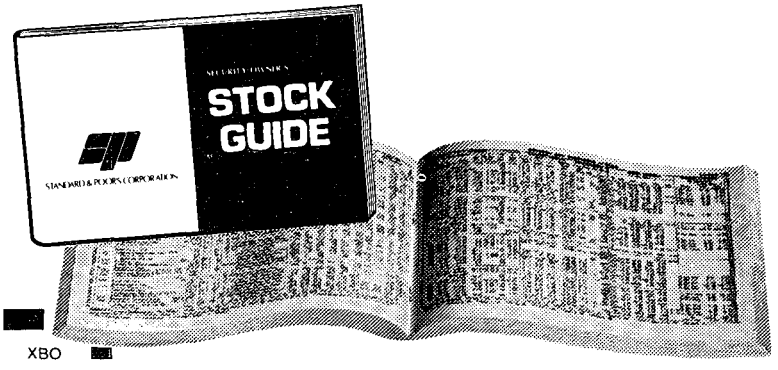

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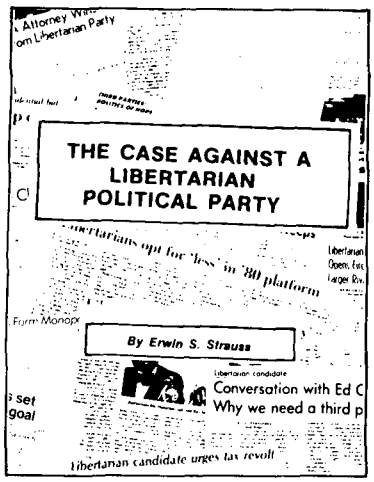
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"rent" the land on which they engaged in their sport, be the most effective way to confine such use to limited areas?

The Improbable Becomes Probable

In Neil Smith's *The Probability Broach* the hero comments that most people "would have taken to the hills, fought for centuries, if necessary, rather than surrender to tyranny." Furthermore, no one "has the authority to surrender." This sounded somewhat far-fetched to me until the Russians invaded Afghanistan.

Robert B. Peirce
McMurray, PA

Medical Inflation

While I find myself in almost total agreement with Charles Fried's article, "Ordering People Around" (Sept.), I do note that he reiterates a dogma which has gone unquestioned in most publications for a considerable length of time, the dogma being the fact that it takes a great deal of public money to educate a physician. The figures often quoted range from $18,000 to $20,000 per year. Certainly a cost like this is not borne by a student's tuition payments.

Having graduated from medical school in 1968, I recall that the first two years of my medical training had an overabundance of professors. For example, there were eight professors of physiology for 65 students in the class. Five of these were graduate students in physiology, and the entire course was oriented toward them. Each of the professors, while being paid a year's salary, participated only to a small degree in our education. Two professors teaching full-time would have been more than adequate to cover the subject. In the third and fourth years of medical school, the clinical years, most of the professors were busy with their private research of their private practice. I can recall two professors who had time to teach me as a medical student. We students spent over half our time doing "scut work" (essentially, running errands for our superiors). Graduate students and residents combined were in the main responsible for our teaching.

The costs that are often quoted are grossly inflated and exaggerated and reflect subsidies for graduate students, research, and other projects surrounding the medical school and do not in truth reflect the cost of educating a medical student. I, for one, certainly would have been happy to borrow the money to pay any additional tuition costs to have received a medical education worthy of the profession.

M.R. Grate, Jr., M.D.
Tallahassee, FL

Thesis Not Embraced

If you do not receive many letters critical of Edward Cline's perverse comments on *Last Embrace* (Aug.), it may be due to the limited exposure this film enjoyed outside the largest metropolitan markets. Let me dispel three of the alleged "incoherencies" upon which he hangs his overblown thesis concerning the decay of our culture: (1) The agent who attempts to kill Hannon-Scheider is the unbalanced brother of Scheider's late wife, who blames Scheider for her death; it is not a departmental assassin acting on official orders. (2) The fact that the Janet Margolin character shows up in his apartment *could* suggest that she is in league with his employers—after all, mystery creators are supposed to plant false leads—but is also entirely consistent with her private motives as they are ultimately revealed. (3) The bathtub murder is very obviously *real,* not a dream, and Scheider drives Margolin to the scene of the crime to confront her; she chooses death over the alternatives of prosecution or killing Scheider to complete her scheme of vengeance. *Last Embrace* is a "gem" of the mystery genre, and it is a shame it has not been more widely exhibited around the country. Mr. Cline's wrong-headed essay is better evidence of cultural decline than anything in the film.

David C. Amidon, Jr.
Director of Urban Studies
Lehigh University
Bethlehem, PA

Mr. Cline replies: First, I am surprised that anyone even remembers *Last Embrace;* after a very short run at a few showcase theaters, it closed. This was about two years ago.

Second, Mr. Amidon's comments only lend credence to my thesis. His strenuous remarks are not dissimilar from those I overheard in the audience; there were as many patrons who were certain about particular facets of the story as there were those who were not. For this reason, I will not attempt to refute Mr. Amidon's points. I do not recall any of the characters being identified as anyone's unbalanced brother (unless someone mumbled something to this effect somewhere in the dialogue), nor can I say with certainty that Margolin was (or was not) dreaming erotic murder (it didn't help,

(Continued on p. 65.)

brickbats

☐ **As Nicolas von Hoffman** notes, 1980 is a year with three born-again candidates for president. It is also the year of the dirtiest campaign in over 100 years. Among the lowest of the low, for instance, was President Carter's suggestion that Ronald Reagan, his Republican challenger, had "suggested that participation in the Social Security system not be required by all who work, but be made voluntary." While Reagan had offered, on October 25, 1966, that "we could explore whether a man who could do better on his own" should have the right to provide private insurance, he was quick to point out the presidential smear. That long-ago statement did not mean his plan was "totally voluntary," Reagan made clear. And a good thing, too. For neither disputed Carter's claim that if Social Security were made voluntary "that would destroy the system." If this is confusing, give up. It takes a very particular sort of intelligence to understand that saying that a program would collapse unless citizens were forced to act against their own interests is an argument *in favor* of *retaining* the program. You have to be born with it. Let's hope.

☐ **High meat prices** have distressed the noted Egyptian leader and Barbara Walters pen-pal Anwar Sadat. He has not boffed around like our lil' Jimmy, though. The forceful Mideast peacemonger has taken action: he outlawed meat for one whole month. This may well send the price of meat in pyramid country plummeting, but if you can't eat any, why will you care? (Only those who cheat and eat meat will realize the fruits of the meatout.)

☐ **The world of art** is still celebrating one of the highest triumphs in centuries: the magical genius of artist Tom Otterness has turned 29 minutes of blank videotape into a fabulous "Shot Dog Film." A cable television enterprise in New York City ran the *tour de force*, wherein Monsieur Otterness is shown "tying a small dog to a post and shooting it to death," to squealing art lovers in the Big Apple. The Advance for Mankind was paid for by...the National Endowment for the Arts.

☐ **The "free-enterprise system"** got another shot in the arm recently, when it was announced that the US League of Savings Associations will bring the issue of banking deregulation to the public with a three-month campaign of intensive advertising in the nation's magazines, television, and newspapers. The commercials will cost millions...for the purpose of defeating any move to lessen government protection of the industry—oops, well, we mean, of course, government protection of consumers. "Deregulation has a nice ring to it, smacking of consumer protection and other good things," a public-spirited S&L man admitted, "but the kind of deregulation facing the S&Ls will have an adverse affect on housing finance."

☐ **Christmas comes in September** for the US government (the one in Washington that's been helping you out with your problems, *n'est-ce pas?)*. On September 29, 1978, to take a wild one, the Pentagon took $187,631 out of Santa's little bag to pay for construction at a base that was already targeted for closing. The same cheery month saw the Youth Conservation Corps gift-wrap "1,000 pairs of riding chaps, 4,000 pairs of gloves and 181 chain saws for a YCC camp with only 300 enrollees." You don't need to hire a consultant to figure out the reason why (although, yep, the Department of Interior actually did!): federal funds not spent by midnight, September 30, the last day of the fiscal year, go back to the Big Kitty (the US Treasury, not the taxpayers, silly). Money not spent in year A will undoubtedly be cut in year B. The Federal solution? "Every year since 1965 the Office of Management and the Budget has issued memos stressing that agencies must not 'spend or obligate funds for the sole or even primary purpose of keeping them from lapsing' "! So rest assured, the answer is blowin' in the wind.

☐ **Cheer up.** C'mon now. That old-fashioned American spirit of entrepreneurship is *not* dead. James and Pamela Green of Frenchtown, New Jersey, are alive and kicking. The local authorities are too, however, and have charged the Greens with "endangering the welfare of a child and selling a child." The indictment arises from the Greens' attempt to do business with Italo Patinella, proprietor of Patinella's Auto Sales in Baptistown, New Jersey. The Greens wanted Patinella's $8,000 used 1977 Corvette in exchange for their only slightly used demo-model baby boy of 14 months. The car dealer nearly went for the offer but held out for a better trade-in, wondering, "How could this boy cope with life knowing he was traded for a car?" But the Greens may be in for far more serious prosecution. Federal authorities could well be investigating the situation at this very moment for evidence of price-gouging. A Chevette might have been a "fair" price, but a hot and soupy Vette roadster model? Maybe it is time for Windfall Profits Tax II.

—Thomas Winslow Hazlett

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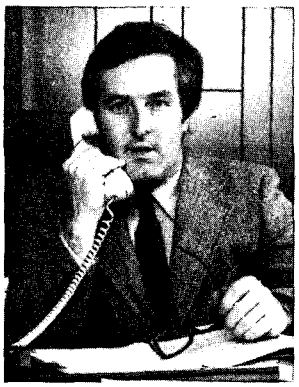

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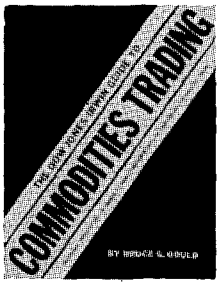

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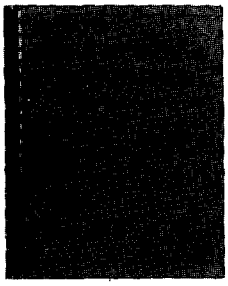

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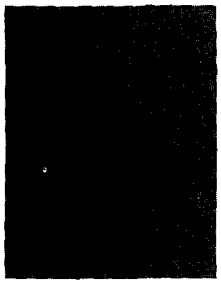

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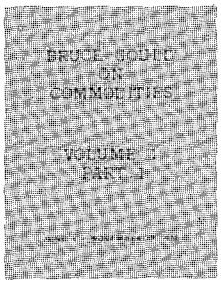

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trends

Low-Level Radiation, Revisited

Is there a threshold level for radiation exposure, below which no harm results? Or is the relationship a linear one, whereby any amount of radiation produces *some* harm? The question still divides scientists, but more and more evidence is accumulating that the former hypothesis is correct.

Consider a study just in from China, as reported in *Science* (August 22). It turns out that Yangjiang County in Guangdong Province has a background radiation level three times as high as in neighboring areas. Since 1972 a group of scientists from the Laboratory of Industrial Hygiene in Beijing has studied the 73,000 residents of Yangjiang County, comparing them with 77,000 people living in two separate control areas nearby, at the same altitude.

The groups were compared on a large variety of health-related indicators: hereditary diseases, congenital abnormalities, chromosome aberrations, the rate of spontaneous abortions, the frequency of malignancies, and the growth and development of children. The findings? There were *no* significant differences on *any* of these measures, lending support to the idea that there is, indeed, a threshold level of radiation below which no harm results.

The alternative view, the "linear" hypothesis, received another blow in August when the Committee on the Biological Effects of Ionizing Radiation (BEIR) issued a revised report on radiation hazards, reducing its previous (1972) estimates of cancer risks by about half. The revision, produced by a seven-member subcommittee, was approved by all but two members of the full 22-member committee of experts. Those two split between one who held out for the linear hypothesis and another who thinks the revised figures still *overestimate the risks.*

Car Quota Drawbacks

The US International Trade Commission (USITC) is currently preparing its recommendation to the president on a complaint by the United Auto Workers union and Ford Motor Company that American auto makers are being hurt by imports. While the final USITC recommendation had not been released at press time, it is encouraging to note that an interim report by USITC cited "potential drawbacks" to the use of import quotas or higher tariffs.

The report noted that American consumers could still choose not to buy the current line of US cars even if import restrictions were imposed. Consumers could keep their cars longer—indeed, the average age of passenger cars in the United States has already increased from 5.7 years in 1972 to 6.4 years in 1979. Furthermore, the USITC report said, American auto makers market a large share of imported vehicles; import restrictions would hurt their sales as well.

Caribbean Victory

Attorney Mary Eugenia Charles took over as Dominica's prime minister late this year, winning the elections on a free-market platform and bringing her opposition Freedom Party to power. Prime Minister Charles, who has said that "foreign investment is the key to our future prosperity," advocates allowing the free market to flourish as the way to recover from the 1979 Hurricane David. A knowledgeable source says Charles is "as pro-free enterprise as any government official can be." Neighboring St. Vincent and Antigua islands have also, in the last year, voted in conservative governments to replace socialist ones.

When to Evacuate

Most planning for protection of the public from nuclear reactor accidents focuses on defining evacuation zones and making plans for moving people from them. Yet in many cases, say two Electric Power Research Institute scientists, the best course is simply to urge people to stay indoors.

Writing in a recent issue of *Science,* Milton Levenson and Frank Rahn point out that a simple wood frame house reduces the dose rate by a factor of 2; a masonry house, by a factor of 10 on the first floor and 50 or more in the basement. Evacuation, by contrast, is likely to *increase* exposure by getting people outdoors (and even more so if they inadvertently move in the direction of the cloud or if the wind shifts unexpectedly). Based on an analysis of past reactor accidents, including Three Mile Island, Levenson and Rahn argue that evacuation is likely to be the best policy only in special circumstances and that in most cases "massive evacuations will only add to the public risk, with little probability of having tangible benefits."

Britain's Indexing Cuts

Britain's welfare benefits are notoriously lavish, and ironically, its strict indexing of those benefits is partly to blame for the disparity between so-called public and private income. The Thatcher government has therefore decided to slow the pace at which benefit checks are increased to reflect a rise in prices. National retirement pension payments (analogous to our Social Security payments) will no longer be tied in to either prices or wages, whichever is greater, but to prices alone. The rate of increase on several specific pensions will also be adjusted by five percent less than previously alloted. The cuts will reportedly save the British government some 350 million pounds in the first year.

Do Jobs Programs Work?

Senator Edward Kennedy's emotional pitch persuaded the Democratic national convention to include in their platform a $12 billion program to create government jobs. Yet the evidence has been accumulating over the past two decades that such programs are not effective.

To begin with, the basic assumption behind many such programs is that they will succeed in providing jobs for the hard-core unemployed—those unemployed for "structural" reasons in the economy. Such people are presumed to be unresponsive to economic growth, during which the private sector creates new jobs. But a new study by Kim Clark and Lawrence Summers of the National Bureau of Economic Research torpedoes that assumption.

Clark and Summers present evidence that "hard-core" groups such as black teenagers (whose unemployment rate is about 36 percent) respond very strongly to a growing economy: their employment rises by six percent for every one percent increase in overall economic activity. Prior studies apparently failed to perceive this because they focused on data on *un*employment rather than employment. But unemployment figures are notorious-

ly unreliable as indicators in such cases, because they reflect only those persons who are "participating" in the work force.

It is precisely such groups as black teenagers that tend to drop out altogether during recessions, not showing up in the labor force numbers at all. Then, when the economy picks up and they reenter the labor force, those who don't find jobs are suddenly *added* to the numbers of unemployed used to compute the unemployment rate, at the same time that many of their compatriots are finding jobs. Thus, looking only at *un*employment figures gives a totally false picture—one that is then used to argue for government jobs programs of the sort backed by Kennedy.

That's not the only evidence against such programs, though. It turns out that the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) and the other major federal jobs programs—touted as being counter-cyclical (that is, counteracting recession)—actually make the business cycle *worse*. That's because it takes so long for Congress to get around to expanding them in response to a recession that they don't really start pumping out the money until the recovery is already well under way. They end up adding new jobs when the economy is running close to full employment. Concludes economist Michael Wachter of the University of Pennsylvania, "CETA expansions turn out to be pro-cyclical rather than counter-cyclical."

Other economists point out that, by and large, the federal programs create few *new* jobs; instead, they simply redistribute the money that pays for jobs. In a 1975 American Enterprise Institute study, Alan Fechter found that between 60 and 90 percent of "Great Society" public employment funds merely displaced state and local funds that would otherwise have paid for the jobs. Today's programs may be even worse; George Johnson of the University of Michigan puts the consensus of economists at 80 percent "fiscal substitution."

These findings may be sinking in. The Democratic platform notwithstanding, the Carter administration's job-creation proposals focus on tax cuts to stimulate business activity rather than expansion of CETA and similar programs.

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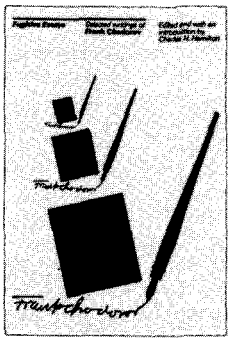

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Rent Control Setbacks

The boom in rent control seems to have come to a halt, as private property advocates increasingly learn to marshal facts and figures and exercise political savvy. Leading the campaign on a national basis is the National Multi-Housing Council, a Washington-based apartment owners' association.

One strategy to fend off controls is to have the state legislature preempt local government's power to enact rent control. That has been accomplished thus far in Arizona, Florida, and Louisiana. (An effort to get such a measure through the California legislature failed, leading to a ballot measure last June that would have limited the scope of local rent control measures; misleadingly advertised as a form of moderate rent control, it was trounced by the voters.)

Generally, where local rent control is subjected to a vote of the citizenry, it has been defeated (as has occurred twice during the past two years in Santa Barbara, California—by two-to-one margins both times), except in cities where tenants make up an overwhelming majority of the population. Most of the California and New Jersey cities with rent controls had them voted in by their city councils, after skillful lobbying campaigns by tenant groups. Recently, however, city councils in Chicago and San Diego have rejected proposals to enact controls. And homeowner and apartment owner groups have organized to work for repeal in Elizabeth and Hackensack, New Jersey.

Richard Fore, president of the NMHC, is modestly optimistic over these developments. "We could be seeing the first sign of a shift in attitudes on the part of

legislators and the public," he told reporter John Betz recently.

Into Space without Taxes

We reported in Editor's Notes last month about NASA's acceptance of private funds to pay for processing data from the Viking Mars spacecraft (via the Viking Fund). We're pleased to be able to note two more private initiatives to support space exploration. While neither specifically promotes less government involvement in space exploration, they do attempt to loosen the stranglehold NASA has had on fund raising (that is, taxes) potentials.

One is the new Planetary Society organized principally by space guru Carl Sagan and Dr. Bruce Murray of Caltech's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Sagan hopes that the formation of a nonprofit, tax-exempt, public-membership group advocating the exploration of the planets, among other things, will both demonstrate popular support for space programs and provide funds for "the stimulation of critical activities" (presumably to be carried out by NASA). Charter membership is $20 a year, and the Society can be reached at P.O. Box 3599, Pasadena, CA 91103.

Jeff Vale of the L-5 Society, on the other hand, is fielding an initiative in Washington state to use lotteries as a non-tax method of State support for space exploration. The first prize winner of the lottery, Vale proposes, would win a trip on the Space Shuttle (or $10,000 tax-free). The initiative also describes the use of lottery money to build an orbiting space station resort (a visit to it could become the next lottery prize). While most observers are pessimistic about the initiative's passage, readers who would like more information could write to Vale at 2451 S. 22nd St., Seattle, WA 98188.

Telephones: Inching toward Deregulation

Although Congress failed to enact a telephone deregulation bill this session, the industry—helped along by the Federal Communications Commission—continues to move toward open competition.

The deregulation bill would ratify the April FCC decision to allow AT&T to enter the data processing business in exchange for losing its monopoly over long-distance service and customer-premises equipment. It passed the House Commerce Committee in August by 34 to 7 but was killed by the Judiciary Committee in September. A Senate version, supported by Senate Commerce Committee Chairman Howard Cannon (of airline deregulation fame), was postponed during the summer due to the illness of several key committee members.

A broad-based coalition is on record in favor of the legislation, including the Communications Workers of America, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, the Electronic Funds Transfer Association, and the National Cable Television Association. Not all of these groups are enthusiastic about competition, but all want Congress to resolve the issue, ending the present climate of uncertainty as FCC actions are continually challenged in court. (In August, for example, a federal appeals court overturned the FCC's year-old decision to allow Western Union Corp. to enter the international telecommunications market; the court said the agency had exceeded its authority.)

Nevertheless, telephone competition continues to accelerate, based on those challengeable FCC decisions. AT&T has announced plans for a complete restructuring to comply with the FCC's controversial April deregulation ruling. Ma Bell plans

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to set up a brand new subsidiary—dubbed "Baby Bell"—to engage in data processing, word processing, and information services.

Bell's long-distance competitors are wasting no time expanding their services. Already there are four firms offering lower-priced long-distance telephone service to businesses: MCI, Southern Pacific, IT&T, and Western Union. The first three also offer residential service, with MCI having signed up 60,000 residential customers since March (See "Slash Your Phone Bill," REASON, Mar. 1980).

Over the next several years, at least three more firms will be entering the market for business long-distance service: GTE Satellite Corp., a revamped American Satellite Corp. (now jointly owned by Fairchild and Continental Telephone), and Satellite Business Systems (the IBM-Comsat-Aetna joint venture). All three will specialize in large-volume business users of voice and data service, transmitted mostly via satellite. The largest customers—SBS estimates about 400 of them—will do enough business to justify having their own satellite dish antennas. A second tier of users—perhaps 3,000—will be served from regional antennas to which they will be linked by special digital networks, again bypassing local phone service. (Small users served by firms such as MCI and Southern Pacific must use the local phone network to tie into the alternative long-distance service.)

Despite congressional delays, the FCC continues to deregulate on its own. In August it proposed exempting from regulation altogether communications firms, such as MCI and Southern Pacific, that are not "dominant" in the market. The FCC staff anticipates that 24 companies fall into that category. Agency personnel contend that the FCC has the legal authority to "forbear" from regulating if it chooses, based on common-carrier decisions dating back to 14th-century England. A second tier of larger firms would be subject to less-stringent regulation than the dominant carriers like AT&T.

FCC Chairman Charles Ferris has no intention of slowing the pace of deregulation. Addressing the International Radio and Television Society in September, he emphasized, "Free enterprise means protecting competition, not competitors... when new technologies arise, unless the facts compel us to intervene, we should get out of the way."

Lifting Usury Limits

The Depository Institutions Deregulation Committee has asked Congress to permanently override state limits on the interest that may be charged on credit cards

and consumer loans. The banking deregulation bill enacted last April temporarily suspended state usury limits (Trends, June), and the committee wants to make this suspension permanent.

Created to examine the effects of the bill, the committee includes representatives of the White House, the Treasury, the Federal Reserve Board, and other banking regulators. After testimony from consumer, business, labor, and government groups, the committee concluded that usury limits block thrift institutions from diversifying into consumer loans in times of high interest rates and thus undermine their financial stability.

The recommendation is bound to be controversial in Congress, as many members feel that a federal override is an infringement of states' rights.

New Hebrides Rebellion Crushed

The libertarian-inspired independence movement in the New Hebrides (see "Wun Niu Fela Kuntri," REASON, Sept.) has been put down by force of arms. At press time, however, there remained hope that some degree of autonomy would be granted to the Espiritu Santo area of Jimmy Stevens and his followers.

After the withdrawal of British-French rule on July 30, outside military forces were brought in by the newly installed socialist government of Walter Lini—some 250 combat troops from Papua New Guinea and Australian officers and aircraft. The PNG troops replaced 200 British and French troops occupying Espiritu Santo as of mid-August. After a series of incidents, including the arrest and beating of 40 of Stevens's people and the killing of his 24-year-old son, Eddie, the rebel headquarters at Tanafo was stormed on Sunday, August 31. Jimmy Stevens and 70 others were captured.

Meanwhile, Fijian chief Ratu Osea Gavidi, acting as a spokesman for Stevens's movement, traveled to Australia and Papua New Guinea to tell Stevens's side and exert diplomatic pressure. Gavidi received considerable publicity in both countries, and his trip led to debate in the PNG legislature over the propriety of Melanesian troops being used against fellow Melanesians.

The same sentiment was evident in Espiritu Santo when the PNG forces refused to transport Stevens to the capital, Vila, for trial, on grounds that it would be unjust to remove him from his land and people. A trial of sorts was therefore begun at Santo town in mid-September, only to be interrupted by a visit to Stevens from the PNG prime minister. At press time, the trial had not resumed, and the PNG troops had left Espiritu Santo and returned home.

New Hebrides prime minister Walter Lini, meanwhile, was reportedly on his way to Fiji to meet with Gavidi. What the outcome of all this will be is anybody's guess, but it appears that—even in jail—Stevens is still considered a force to be reckoned with.

Space Entrepreneurs

While NASA dilly-dallies over the already delayed (by three years) launching of the first space shuttle, private entrepreneurs are busy catching up. Several of the more promising ones were featured in a recent issue of *Venture* magazine, including: Gary C. Hudson, a rocket consultant to NASA and coauthor of the April 1979 REASON article on a space freeport; Robert Truax, who successfully ground-tested a private manned (suborbital) spaceship on June 24 (Trends, Sept.); and Leonard Cormier, a space consultant and a former project engineer on space transport systems for Rockwell.

All three entrepreneurs are working independently on various aspects of developing space trucks for suborbital and orbital flights. Research by Gary Hudson's group—Advanced Propulsion Technology (APT)—thus far has been in the area of specific impulses of fuels. Specific impulse is the amount of thrust per pound of fuel. APT has been experimenting with different fuels in different ways to find the most efficient amount of boosting power. "Conventionally, engineers design rockets to get the most efficient use of fuel around," explains Gayle Pergamit, vice-president of public affairs. "Unfortunately, that particular fuel may cost $10 a pound." Using a less efficient fuel that costs only, say, 50 cents a pound, lowers costs significantly. So APT is testing for fuel mixes and rocket designs on small test engine models and is currently financed for all current research and development work. At the present, it is a division of Hudson's firm, GCH, Inc., but will become an independent entity this spring. The APT division got rolling in May, Pergamit reports, acquired offices and warehouse space for construction in Sunnyvale, California, in June, and began initial design work in July. So far, Pergamit reports, things are going "very well."

Truax is also achieving some success with his planned manned spaceship and hopes to launch his "Volksrocket" from

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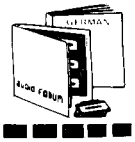

Southern California next year. He expects that the sale of television rights to the event will pay for its development costs and perhaps even return a profit. Leonard Cormier, on the other hand, intends to sell interests in his company, Transpace, Inc., to get it off the ground. He plans to modify the wings, tail, and engine of an existing big jet transport to build a manned first stage launcher. It would take off horizontally from an airport with an unmanned second-stage and manned third-stage rockets riding piggyback.

Meanwhile the granddaddy of private space enterprises, OTRAG (see "Rockets in Africa," REASON, July 1978), is rumored to be alive and well and living in "a developing country"—some say Brazil. You may recall the fuss over OTRAG's original launch site in Zaire, with a *Penthouse* "exposé" of this supposedly West German government-funded private front developing cruise missiles in secrecy in Africa. The real reason for the furor was that OTRAG is quite willing to provide satellite launchers to any country that can pay for them—Third World, European, Chinese, or American. OTRAG plans a series of two-stage suborbital flights with science payloads in 1981, and to launch a small orbiting satellite in 1982.

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Transit Deregulation in England and Chile

Transportation seems to be a favorite target for deregulation, perhaps because inefficiency in that area is so obvious and affects consumers so directly. In London the newspaper of the Freedom Association, *The Free Nation,* recently gave Transport Minister Normal Fowler an "Enemy of the State" award for setting high standards in "deregulating and cutting that ought to be the rule rather than the exception for Mrs. Thatcher's ministries."

In his past 15 months as transport minister, Fowler has managed to end a ban on fare-paying car passengers, to cut civil service rolls by 18 percent, and to denationalize the National Freight Corporation, Sealink Ferries, and Seaspeed Hovercraft. Fowler has also allowed school buses to carry fare-paying adults and plans to partially denationalize the British Transport Docks Board. Furthermore, he has encouraged free-enterprise bus service in local areas and has arranged for the sale of 40 million pounds worth of State interests in motorway service areas.

Chile is also removing regulations on transit services. Professor Arnold Harberger of the University of Chicago, an advisor to the Chilean government, reports that new freedoms in transportation include: freedom of entry in the taxi industry, unrestricted conversion of taxis to jitneys (*collectivos*), and unregulated choice of routes for buses.

Poland Moves toward the Market

The Polish workers' strike that monopolized the news for several weeks in late summer is by no means over. Polish courts are still considering the legality of the form of the new independent (that is, nongovernment) unions being organized by the Gdansk interfactory strike committee (known by its Polish initials, MKZ). Entrenched official unions are also fighting the new unions by intimidating workers, news reports say.

But there are signs that repercussions from the strike will last for a long time. A new government took over in late August, with four antireform members of the ruling Communist Party Politburo ousted and two new liberal members named in their place. Finance Minister Marian Krzak has talked about the need to decentralize responsibility to individual enterprises and to overhaul the internal pricing system, which is politically motivated and bears little relation to actual market costs. (Interestingly, a reporter for the *Los Angeles Times* elaborated on these points, explaining that central planners cannot know what costs really are and what prices should be "since there is no open market or competition to determine them"—shades of Ludwig von Mises!)

The government says it will also try to reduce popular farm subsidies, to increase incentives for individuals to go into business for themselves, and to allow people the right to set up franchises of State-owned service companies. In the meantime, it is reported that 80 to 90 percent of workers in Gdansk are opting to join the new unions, some groups moving lock, stock, and barrel from government to independent union. Some have also predicted that the independent union movement will affect other areas, such as acting as an impetus to schoolteachers who have begun lobbying to scrap the newly adopted Russian pattern of secondary education.

Entrepreneurs Offer Medical House Calls

Imagine that you're alone at home one weekend and you twist your ankle painfully while nurturing the nasturtiums in the garden. Driving yourself to the hospital would be a pain, but on the other hand, your accident isn't serious enough to warrant an ambulance. What do you do? Well, if you're a member of Doctors' House Call Service in the Orange County area of California, you hobble to your telephone and dial a number. Soon after, a physician and a medical assistant drive up in their radio-equipped mobile unit to treat your injury.

Participation in this new service is through payment of of a one-time membership fee of $50 for individuals and senior citizens' households and $79.50 for families of any size. A complete medical file is kept on each member, and his or her

place of residence is placed on a map for easy reference. House calls and medication provided are then billed as used at a rate comparable to office visits. While the program is especially attractive to senior citizens and other people who are not mobile (such as a parent at home with three small kids), even those with a regular family physician can benefit from the 24-hour availability of home medical service. Complete reports of any treatment given in such cases can be sent to one's regular physician.

While it is too early to gauge the popularity of this market service, it will be interesting to come back to Doctors' House Call Service in a year and see just how accurately it has felt the consumer's pulse.

Alaska Repeals Its Income Tax

Despite opposition from the governor and a court decision overturning a previous income tax repeal measure, Alaska's legislature finally pushed through a bill repealing that state's 31-year-old state income tax retroactive to January 1979. The legislature also passed a measure allowing rebates to be paid to 1979 taxpayers to the tune of $185 million.

The achievement of Alaska's tax repeal can be directly attributed to the efforts of lone Libertarian representative Dick Randolph. Earlier this year, Randolph and the Alaska Libertarian Party succeeded in gathering enough signatures to place a measure on the statewide ballot that would have rolled back state income taxes to one percent. Gov. Jay Hammond, who was opposed to the measure, preempted the initiative by introducing a bill that allowed residents who had previously paid at least three years of taxes to be exempt from future tax payments. It passed but was then challenged in the state supreme court as discriminatory and declared unconstitutional. Hammond then tried to pass a measure that would repeal income taxes for only 10 years. It was rejected by the legislature. The Alaska House voted unanimously to pass the outright repeal of state income taxes, and the Senate concurred with an 18-to-1 vote. The governor signed the bill immediately, apparently realizing that his continued opposition would be a political liability.

Market Care for the Disabled

One of the lingering fears in many people's minds is that the "cold-hearted" private sector cannot be trusted to care for the handicapped, that only government

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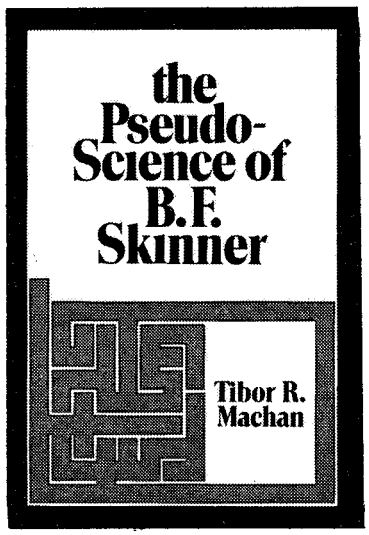

- **Is behaviorism really scientific?**
- **Is free will a meaningless concept?**
- **Would a Skinnerian society be a dictatorship?**

Tibor Machan addresses these questions in this important book on the ideas of B. F. Skinner. If you're concerned about the relationship of science to ethics and politics, this book is must reading.

B. F. Skinner claims to study human behavior scientifically. But does Skinner's view of science hold up under scrutiny? Skinner's influence *is* considerable in some circles—educational psychology, prison reform, and other areas where behavior mod is in vogue. But his impact is now declining. This book explains why Skinner's views, though at first appearing very helpful, actually deliver far less than they promise.

Dr. Machan takes a unique approach to Skinner's politics. He shows that, *by Skinner's own account*, his views lead to a *technocracy of behaviorists*. Skinner holds that proper values and goals are whatever he and his peers want! (Really!)

Finally, Machan shows why a correct view of science does not conflict with free will and political liberty. He shows why science *cannot* require that human behavior be determined, as Skinner maintains. (Science is committed to identifying and studying human nature—something that precludes deterministic prejudgement by social scientists.)

You can obtain this important book at a substantial savings — 40% *off the regular price*. Regularly $9.95, *The Pseudo-Science of B.F. Skinner* is available to REASON readers for only $5.97. To obtain your copy, send in the coupon below with your check or money order.

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will take the pains to perform this "non-profit" service. But, as in so many other instances, private insurance is proving that it, for one, has incentives in this area.

Liberty Mutual Insurance Company has funded the development by researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology of a "bionic" arm, introduced a decade ago as the Boston Arm. The company has since paid to fit some 85 persons (most of them policyholders) with the arm at an average cost of $2,500. Liberty Mutual does this because the arm can mean the difference between paying large claims for total disability and simply aiding the victim to near-normal ability.

The program has been so successful that Liberty Mutual has helped fund a second-generation bionic arm, developed by the University of Utah's Institute of Biomedical Engineering. (So-called bionic artificial limbs are activated by tensing a muscle over which a sensor has been taped; the flex generates an electrical impulse, which then turns on a miniature electric motor implanted in the arm; the motor runs until the muscle is tensed again.)

Even gigantic American Telegraph and Telephone Company is not without a (motivated) heart: for many years it has been giving free second-hand teletype machines to deaf customers, making it possible for them to communicate over the phone. What these examples show is that private incentives exist for helping the handicapped. Whether those incentives are "pure" or tainted by profit motives seems to be beside the point; the end, after all, is achieved, and without using involuntary (tax) means.

Free Trade and FTC See Eye-to-Eye

When the Federal Trade Commission in 1978 struck down association rules and state laws prohibiting the advertising of eyeglasses, there was grumbling about how commercialism would encourage shoddy quality and shortchange the consumer. A study of the first year the FTC rule was in effect (Oct. 1978-Oct. 1979), however, shows quite the contrary. While the Consumer Price Index rose 12.2 percent and medical prices went up by 9.4 percent, the price of a pair of eyeglasses increased only by 6.5 percent. The FTC believes that advertising was a crucial factor in holding down those prices, particularly since an earlier FTC study had shown that in states where eyeglass advertising was restricted, the average price for an examination and a pair of eyeglasses was $95. Where advertising was allowed, however, the same services averaged $73 at an optometrist's and $61 at a large chain dispenser.

Meanwhile, the FTC staff is urging the commission to lift restrictions on the employment of optometrists. At present, most states have laws preventing eyeglass stores and chain and department stores from hiring optometrists on the grounds that commercial considerations would compromise professional concerns (only optometrists are licensed to give eye examinations and write prescriptions). The FTC could decide either to adopt a trade regulation rule banning such restrictions or could circulate an agency recommendation urging states to abolish such restrictions on their own. At press time, no decision had been made.

Milestones

• *Laetrile Legislation.* California Governor Jerry Brown has signed a bill legalizing the use of Laetrile for cancer patients in university teaching hospitals.

• *IRS Rebuffed.* The House voted 401-to-4 to forbid the Internal Revenue Service from even considering a withholding tax on dividend and interest income. This fundraising gem was suggested by the White House last March.

• *Addiction versus Relief.* Despite testimony by doctors that heroin is the most effective drug for pain relief for dying cancer patients, officials from the Food and Drug Administration, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and the National Cancer Institute all argued against legislation that would allow such patients to use heroin. Their rallying cry: it might lead to more addiction among young people.

• *New School Rulings.* Carles and Alyne Davis won an appeal in Missouri reversing an earlier lower court decision that they had violated compulsory attendance laws and failed to provide proper instruction for their child by teaching him at home. In Minnesota, a jury conviction of a home-schooling family for violation of school attendance laws was reversed on appeal on the grounds that their constitutional rights under the free exercise of religion clause of the First Amendment were being violated.

• *Conservatives Urge Defense Cuts.* A Republican Study Committee headed by Rep. John Rousselot listed 107 examples of "waste, fraud, abuse and mismanagement in the federal government" and—to everyone's surprise—included $14.7 billion in excessive spending by the Department of Defense. The study group members vowed that they would try to implement the proposed cutbacks by amending appropriations bills.

• *Land Satellite Market.* Comsat General Corporation has tried to convince Congress that a private company could run a viable Landsat remote sensing system, operational by 1985, but the Department of Commerce stubbornly insists that commercial viability will not come before 2000 (and perhaps not then) and that government therefore needs to continue operating the satellite. In the meantime, some European and Japanese companies expect to have operational technology to set up their own systems by mid-1980. And people wonder why American technology is being overtaken!

• *ICC Throws Out More Rules.* Besides following the guidelines passed by Congress on rate deregulation (Trends, Nov.), the Interstate Commerce Commission further gave truckers the freedom to raise or lower their rates up to 10 percent without giving advance notice to industry rate bureaus. The advance-notice provision had removed incentives to cut rates because competitors would be tipped off in advance, ICC officials said.

• *Sea-Law Treaty Update.* From Germany has come unexpected support for the US mining industry's view that the UN Law of the Sea Treaty may shortchange their efforts. Its parliament has passed a seabed mining law similar to that passed by the US Congress (Trends, Aug.), and a German official at the UN conference says that they do not share American negotiator Elliot Richardson's desire for a hasty conclusion at any cost.

• *Building Immunity.* Wyoming is the 10th state to declare unconstitutional a statute that limits the time during which a builder can be sued for damages resulting from faulty construction. In other states where a similar statute has been sustained, the reasoning has been that builders are entitled to this special immunity because they have to contend with such variables as building design and site conditions, while other parties involved in construction—such as materials suppliers—can and should have more control over their work.

• *Costly Blockade.* The Coast Guard blockade of the Florida coastline ordered by President Carter is costing American taxpayers $700,000 a day, making it "the most expensive peacetime operation" in the Coast Guard's history, Coast Guard spokesman Greg Robinson said. And because the federal government insists on sheltering Cuban refugees from the hard facts of life, it is spending another $56,000 a day to feed over 1,600 Cubans at detention centers and $1 million a week to feed and shelter about 15,250 refugees at relocation centers. The Cubans are certainly getting early training in the welfare mentality.

—Robert Poole, Jr., and Christine Dorffi

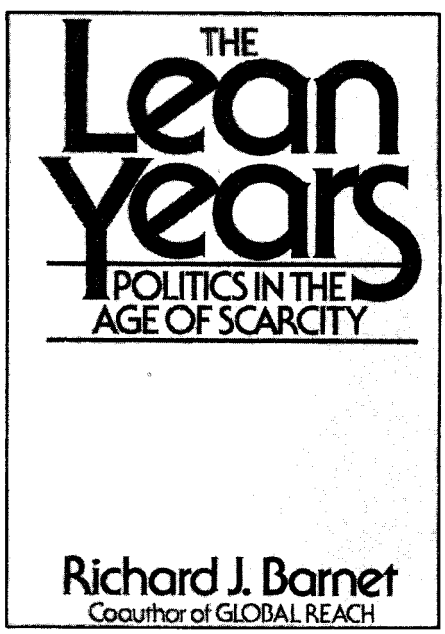
FOOD LINES AT THE GLOBAL FACTORY

A recipe for lean years.

By Alan Reynolds

The Lean Years: Politics in the Age of Scarcity.

By Richard J. Barnet. New York: Simon and Schuster. 1980. 349 pp. $12.95.



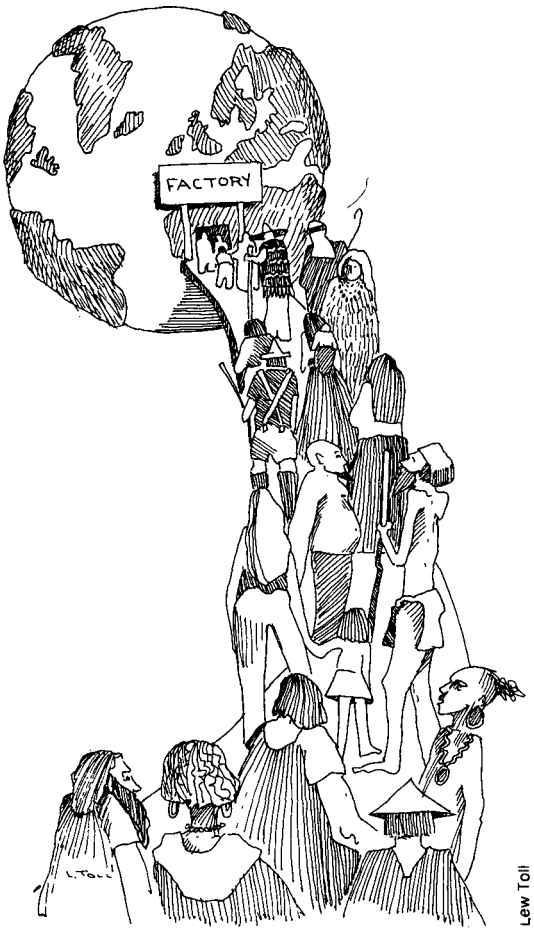
RICHARD BARNET, FOUNDER AND codirector of the Washington-based Institute for Policy Studies, State Department advisor during the Kennedy administration, author of six other books and coauthor of *Global Reach: The Power of the Multinational Corporations* (1975), has blessed us with another book. Its main thesis, understandably obscured, is that hunger, unemployment, and scarcity of water and energy are due to...capitalism. Socialist planning on an international scale can bring global abundance in unspecified ways.

"Scarcity is a product of political and economic organization," says Barnet. "Scarcity is real because the control of resources is planned in such a way that much of the world does not have enough." Take it from *X* and give it to *Y* (but don't let food get outside your region or let foreigners get in). "National dependence on foreign minerals," he adds, "like the nation's dependency on foreign oil, is a consequence of private corporate decisions." Even more explicitly: "Capitalism requires the unrestricted right to turn public resources into private wealth."

A secondary theme is a romantic vision of "village life" and the "disappearing peasant"—essentially a now-familiar plea for deurbanization and demechanization. "The mechanization of agriculture," notes Barnet, "has sharply reduced employment possibilities in the countryside." Throw away the tractors and go back to manual labor and the pastoral bliss of the Middle Ages.

Food is treated as a natural right or resource, as in "the global maldistribution of water is even more pronounced than the maldistribution of energy or food." From this Garden of Eden theory of farming comes the "bedrock principle" that every person on earth "has a vested right to a decent minimal share of world resources by virtue of having been born."

Barnet does not try quite hard enough to conceal his regard for Soviet-style socialism. He openly admires Marx, Engels, and Lenin; cites *Monthly Review* and the *Progressive* as sources; and says naive things like, "Socialists call for abundance for the many rather than the few." "The most impressive achievement of socialist societies," he opines, "is that thousands who lived rote lives under



Lew Toll

the old regime are now awake." The cheerful Polish workers, for example.

Predictably, then, Barnet treats government as synonymous with enlightenment and virtue. "The triumph of the oil companies," he writes, "has been their ability to... discredit the idea of government at the very moment when planning in the public interest is so obviously needed for survival." With this perspective he manages to blame gasoline waiting lines on the oil companies, citing an opinion poll as "evidence" and never even mentioning the Energy Department. He favors a government monopoly on oil imports (which would simply make it easier for OPEC to detect members who undercut the cartel price). He suggests that we need a "democratic planning system" and that "it may be necessary to nationalize" the oil companies.

LEAN ON LOGIC

This is the flavor of the book. Its most distinctive feature is an unsurpassed flow of inconsistency and contradiction. Barnet favors both central planning and community control; he opposes both the rising price of wood and cutting down trees; he deplores the uranium cartel but favors a cartel "to support mineral prices"; he loves renewable resources but hates burning wood.

- On one page, we worry that "more and more goods are now made in the poor countries...to be consumed in the industrial heartland." A little later, however, we find that "one out of every six jobs in the U.S. and one out of every three acres are devoted...to exports to poor countries." In the poor countries, however, "only a sliver of the population can afford cars," though elsewhere we learn that over the next decade US auto companies "are counting on the market in Asia and Latin America to double and the African market to triple."
- "The more global the market," says Barnet, "the more the giants prevail." Turn a few pages, and the problem becomes the "unique opportunities companies from small countries have to take markets away from giants." A few more, and we are reminded that "in 1947 the U.S. produced 60 percent of the world's steel; in 1975, 16 percent."
- "Growing parochialism in the United States" is deplored, but Barnet says "local and regional self-reliance should be promoted," with Boston apparently growing its own wheat.
- There are "462 million people actually starving," but "hunger can be eliminated with a 5 percent increase in world food production."

BLOATED WITH CLAIMS

The casual reader is deluged with gratuitous, unsupported assertions. For instance: "a growing middle class around the world is eating better. But hunger is also increasing." A growing middle class necessarily means fewer rich or fewer poor, and Barnet surely doesn't intend to say there are fewer rich.

"The population explosion," claims Barnet, "has far outstripped the capacity of the Global Factory and its extensions in the service sector to provide enough jobs. Since the U.S. labor market is merely a division of the world labor market, the effects of global oversupply are felt here." Howling nonsense, of course. Employment growth has far outpaced population here and wherever else some economic freedom is allowed.

"Industrial nations," he writes, "are in a position to keep prices of commodities low and manufactured goods high." That venerable myth was debunked by a UN group of experts way back in 1975.

When statistics are given, they are often conspicuously meaningless: "In the Third World," says the author, "the unemployed and the cruelly underpaid make up 40 percent of the work force." This is like saying poor countries contain poor people.

From 1972 to 1977 the Europeans "reduced their oil imports 1.7 million barrels a day," which Barnet attributes to greater efficiency. But most of Europe was in a boom in 1972 and a slump in 1977, not to mention the help of North Sea Oil in reducing imports. He contrasts the European imports measured in barrels with US imports measured as a percentage of energy use, which is deliberately misleading.

"The energy consumption in rural India," boasts Barnet, "is one-fiftieth what it is on U.S. farms." Sure. And if we followed the Indian example, millions would starve to death.

On rare occasions when the research is reasonably careful, Barnet drops all the necessary *ifs* and *buts* whenever he wants a dramatic conclusion. "Keeping the cities ablaze with light powered by nuclear generators," he says, "is valued more than the thousands who are fated to die from radiation-induced cancers." His only support for this figure, which the reader has to remember from 214 pages earlier, is that "a number of studies now suggests that the incidence of cancer deaths is 6 to 7 percent higher among workers in nuclear plants than among the general population." No footnote, of course, and other cited studies contradict the weak conclusion.

IMPOVERISHED ANALYSIS

Efforts at economic analysis range from barely literate to incoherent. For example: "Another reason minerals are bound to become more expensive is the increasing role of the *metals* speculators. In dollar volume,

commodity speculation is the world's biggest industry. *The Wall Street Journal* recently reported that $50 trillion in *foreign exchange* is traded around the world each year" (emphasis added). It is clear that the author hasn't the foggiest idea that there's a difference between metals, commodities, and currencies.

He goes on to explain that "the volume of dollars circulating in the world is perhaps twenty times the volume of world trade, which means that dollars are being traded not as currency to buy goods but as commodities themselves." More gross ignorance, this time of the difference between financial assets (like Treasury bills) and transactions money, neither of which has any relationship whatsoever to the volume of world trade.

Somebody is quoted saying that labor-intensive technology can provide "more than ten times as many jobs as capital-intensive plants for the same output." That is true by the definition of labor-intensive and says nothing about whether or not the "same output" could be sold at a price that would cover costs (much less pay "decent" wages).

This sort of thing may sell in Cambridge and Scarsdale, but it really is quite silly.

Rather than cope with any opposing arguments or evidence, Barnet invariably tries to attribute evil motives to the opposition. An enormous body of evidence linking the length of unemployment to the generosity of the dole is dismissed as being simply "fashionable" among "those with regular paychecks." It may be fashionable, but is it false? Barnet's book, too, and many others like it, is fashionable among the well-heeled.

And here is a classic use of the conspiratorial innuendo: "Jeffrey A. Nichols, president of a corporation doing economic research for oil companies, is not disturbed by his clients' profits." Actually, Jeff Nichols is a young economist with Argus Research, where I used to work; he certainly is not president of that firm, and the Argus clients are mostly small brokers and banks.

There is the customary sneering at the tastes of the boorish masses, apparently required in "liberal" literature. The American people have a "mania for motion" and "indiscriminate consumption." "There is something faintly obscene about the extravagant use of water in the American home." There is a "national passion for roaming the highways," and the interstate highway system is simply a "playground for the nation's cars." "In the U.S. the annual 50,000-plus highway deaths are accepted as the price of progress. Individual comfort and idiosyncracy are valued more than the preservation of life."

This sort of thing may sell in Cambridge and Scarsdale, but it really is quite silly. Transportation of people and goods does involve costs and risks; the failure to transport people and goods would have them also. Nobody has even hinted at any viable alternative to existing methods of transportation, except for minor changes in what vehicles we use and how efficiently they operate. To assert that highways are "playgrounds" and using them is an "idiosyncracy" shows how far fashionable rhetoric can stray from reality. Barnet and his food supply should travel by horses on dirt roads.

The attitude toward poorer nations is equally maternal: "It is now commonplace," we're told, "for the husband to take a disproportionate amount of money to buy cheap consumer goods—a bicycle or a transistor—instead of food needed for the children." Again: "Ten percent of the population of Seoul live in shacks; two-thirds of them, it is estimated, used to be rice farmers." (As rice farmers, of course, they had their own rural estates.)

ABUNDANT ERRORS

Despite all the wailing about Third World poverty, the book's proposed reforms are not exactly humane. More like murderous. "The goal for the world food system should be maximum self-reliance of nations and regions." The world needs "austerity programs for the rich" (like Jamaica and Cuba), plus a tough minimum wage. "To achieve full employment may require greater protectionism," as in 1930. Rich countries should also keep out migrant workers, because "they are competing for jobs and costing cities money for welfare."

In this country, "federal policy should encourage smaller farms because they are more saving of both soil and energy." No farms at all would save even more soil and energy. Barnet claims "there is a considerable literature *from underdeveloped countries* which suggests that productivity per acre declines as farms become larger" (emphasis added). But what has that got to do with *US* farming?

Despite all the wailing about Third World poverty, the book's proposed reforms are not exactly humane.

Putting it all together, we have here a poisonous recipe for mass starvation in the Third World. The United States should not let in foreign goods or people nor sell food abroad. The developing countries should tax success and arbitrarily raise labor costs. If a country can't grow enough food, too bad.

The Lean Years is an ostensibly serious book about genuinely serious topics. Unfortunately, about every other page contains a factual error or an unsupported assertion; the space between is filled with conceptual or analytical bloopers. We end up with a collection of unreal statistics patched together with cute phrases and illogical contradictions. Anyone *seriously* concerned with the plight of people who live in poor countries would be better advised to buy their products, sell them yours, and hire illegal aliens. ◻

Alan Reynolds is vice-president of research at a major US bank and a contributing editor of REASON. *His Viewpoint column appears here every third month.*

A HEINLEIN ODYSSEY

By F. Paul Wilson

The Number of the Beast.

By Robert A. Heinlein. New York: Fawcett Columbine Books. 1980. 511 pp. $6.95 paper.

The trouble with Bob Heinlein is that he doesn't need to write. When I want a story from him, the first thing I have to do is think up something he would like to have, like a swimming pool. The second thing is to sell him on the idea of having it. The third thing is to convince him he should write a story to get the money to pay for it, instead of building it himself.

—John W. Campbell, Jr.

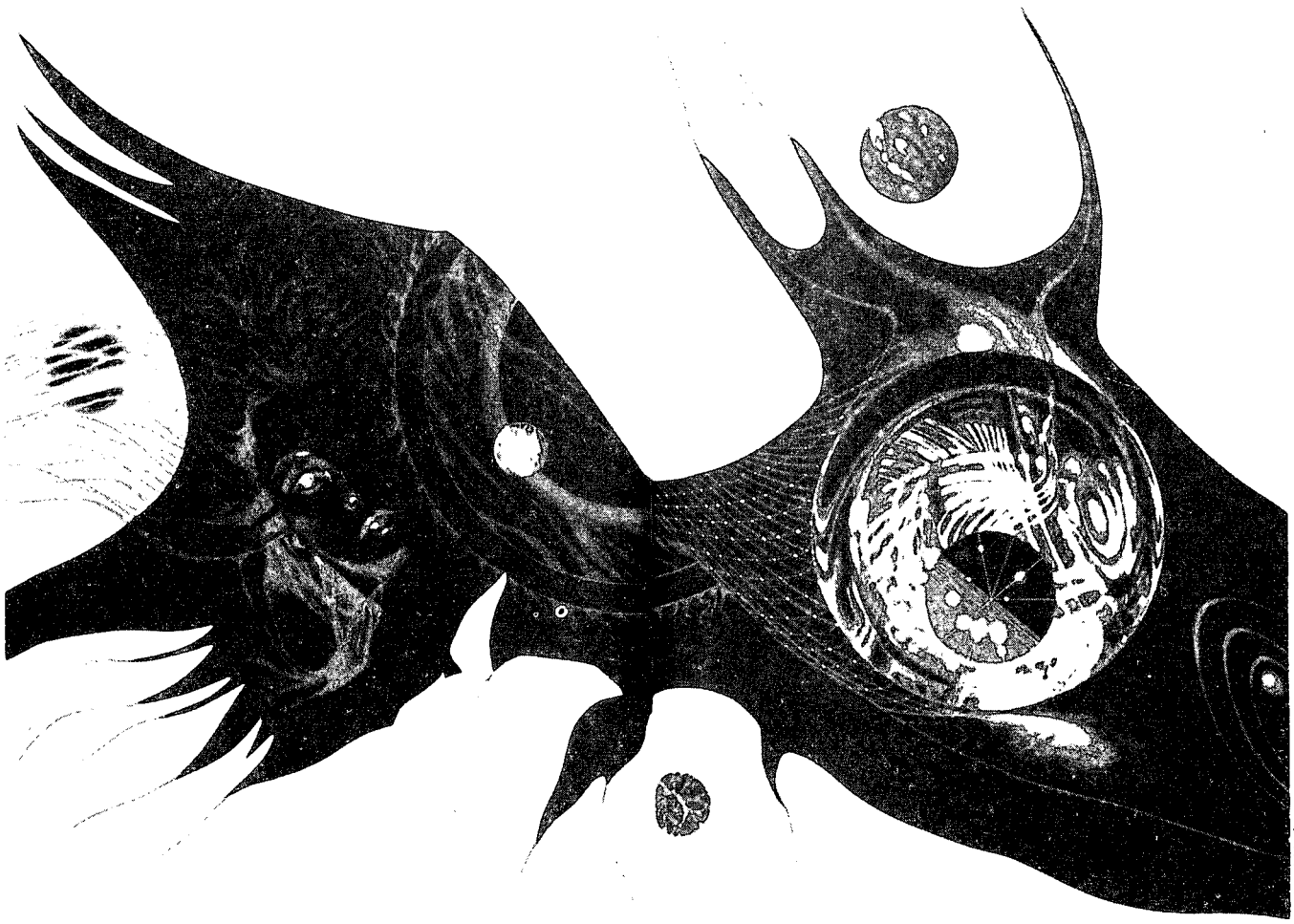
IT BEGAN IN 1939. ROBERT ANSON Heinlein was 32, a Naval Academy graduate who, because of tuberculosis, had been retired long before his time. He was looking for something to do. As a lark, and because he thought he might get a little money out of it (the Depression was still on), he wrote a short story called "Lifeline" and sent it to a pulp magazine called *Astounding Stories.* John W. Campbell, Jr. had been in the editor's chair there for two years and was looking for writers capable of creating a new kind of science fiction. This unknown named Heinlein must have showed promise, because Campbell bought that first story and started a relationship that would change the face of science fiction.

With Campbell's prodding and encouragement, Robert A. Heinlein began producing stories about the future peopled with characters who *lived* in that future. Gone were the long, expository passages describing social and political orders of the day or explaining in detail the technological marvels on all sides. Instead, the reader was experiencing the future through the eyes of an inhabitant of that future, and that inhabitant took it all for granted—just as all readers take their own surroundings for granted. Nowadays, this approach to writing sf is *de rigueur*; in 1939 it was something new. But it caught on. Readers liked the challenge of piecing a future world via innuendo and insinuation from a character's casual observations. It heightened the feeling of *being there* and added to the sense of wonder so necessary to successful science fiction.

Over the next few years, many other stories in the same mold began to sprout up, most notably by Anson MacDonald, but also by Lyle Monroe, Caleb Saunders, and John Riverside. They weren't imitating Heinlein—they *were* Heinlein, who was cranking out stories, good stories, so fast that he had to use pseudonyms to keep his name from appearing two or three times on *Astounding's* contents page. What has come to be known as the Golden Age of Science Fiction had been launched.

After the war, Heinlein wrote *Rocketship Galileo,* which was eventually made into George Pal's *Destination Moon,* and which began a train of juvenile sf novels that has seldom been equalled in quality. Everything he wrote sold well. He became known as the Dean of Science Fiction and could have gone on doing endless variations on his favorite theme of the competent man, with predictable financial and critical success for the rest of his days.

Instead, he chose to experiment, much to the alternating delight, con-



Richard M. Powers

cern, and fury of his legion of fans. *Starship Troopers* won him a Hugo award in 1960 and a reputation as some sort of cryptofascist. Two years later, after *Stranger in a Strange Land* brought another Hugo, people were calling him a heretic and a sex nut. *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* earned him still another Hugo and endeared him to libertarians for its rational anarchist philosophy and the famous acronym *tanstaafl.* After reading *I Will Fear No Evil,* some people thought he was a pervert, and with *Time Enough for Love,* a number of critics said it was all over for Robert A. Heinlein, despite his Grand Master Award from the Science Fiction Writers of America.

But it's not all over. At age 73, 41 years and 41 books after "Life-line," he has given us *The Number of the Beast,* a long rambling book not at all like what he was writing in the '40s and '50s, but more in line with the style he has developed over the past decade.

For most of its length, *The Number of the Beast* dwells almost exclusively on its four protagonists: Jake Burroughs; his wife, Hilda; Jake's daughter, Dejah Thoris ("Deety"); and her husband, Zebadiah John Carter. All four are exceptionally bright people, ranging in age from 26 to 49. All have science-oriented backgrounds. The book concerns their flight from one alternate universe to another in search of a new home safe from the aliens pursuing them.

The four protagonists hop from universe to universe looking for a safe and suitable place to settle, arguing all the way.

Why are aliens pursuing them? That is never really clear, but it is assumed that the aliens want to prevent dissemination of Dr. Jake Burroughs's latest discovery. Jake, a mathematical genius, has come to the conclusion that all existence is made up of not four but *six* dimensions—three spatial and three temporal. By his calculations, the number of possible universes along these axes, accessible either by translation or rotation, is 6^{6^6} (that's six to the sixth power to the sixth power). And according to the Book of Revelations in the Bible, 666 is the Number of the Beast—hence the title of the book. But not only has Jake Burroughs discerned the existence of the two extra axes, he has devised a way to move along any and all of them, to any alternate universe he chooses. (Frankly, I find Jake's theory and his translation/rotation device easier to swallow than a man with a middle name of John and a last name of Carter meeting and marrying someone named Dejah Thoris Burroughs.)

The four protagonists hop from

(Continued on p. 43.)

FASCISM BY ANY OTHER NAME...

Is reindustrialization an improvement on the New Deal?

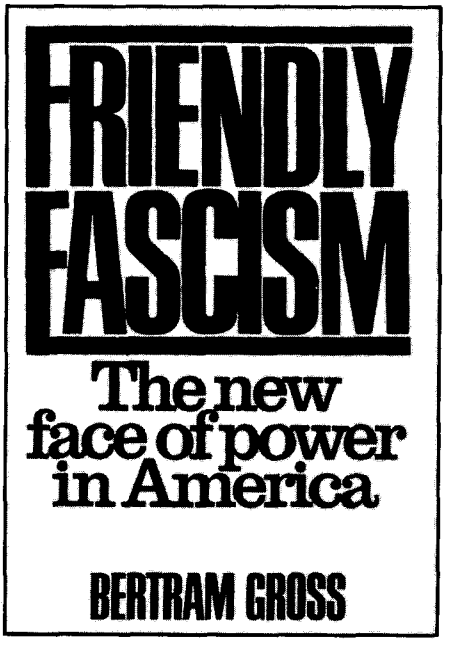
By Karl Hess

Friendly Fascism: The New Face of Power in America.

By Bertram Gross.
New York: M. Evans. 1980. 410 pp.
$15.00.

EVENTS HAVE ALREADY OUTDISTANCED this book. Its thesis, that the managers of Big Business and Big Government will enter a new monopoly agreement to regiment the rest of us, is advanced rather breathlessly as the author's own ingenious plumbing of the depths of American possibility. And, to be sure, it is a properly documented and altogether credible job.

In point of sad fact, though, the friendly fascism of the title and thesis is already close to the status of national policy, lacking only presidential declaration to push it over the top. And given the statements and character of the major-party candidates in this election year, there is nothing to prevent just such a declaration no matter which of the pair has won by the time this reaches print.



A recent issue of *Business Week,* for instance, was devoted almost entirely to what it called "The Reindustrialization of America." *Fortune* magazine has editorialized on the same thing, calling for an American arrangement that would go beyond and, naturally, offer Yankee improvements upon the wildly popular Japanese notion of State-Business-Everything Else collaboration. Joseph Kraft, the "establishment" columnist, writes about it frequently, even dropping some hints that Ronald Reagan might do more for the development than Jimmy Carter.

NEAR-SIGHTED FUTUROLOGY

The thesis of the reindustrialization project: that there needs to be a new monopoly agreement, a rapprochement between Big Government, Big Business, and, as a sensible addition, Big Labor, so that the rest of us can be harnessed to a centrally planned, smoothly humming economy which, through some delirious misuse of language, will be called free private enterprise or capitalism. The most confusing part of Professor Gross's book is that he actually seems to believe that that is exactly what it *would* be.

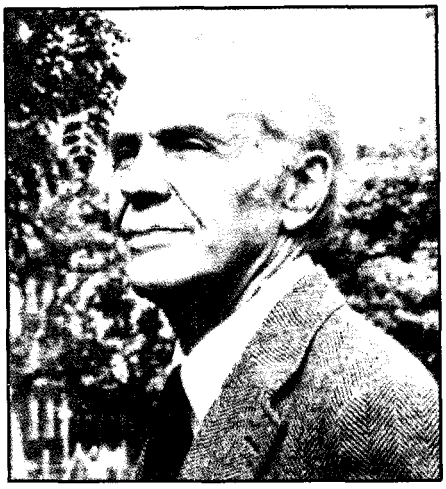
Throughout this engrossing but maddening book, there is reference to friendly fascism as an advanced stage of capitalism, of the free market, of

just about everything pertaining to volitional exchange. The alternative to it is just as incessantly seen as some form of democratic socialism, although, mercifully, the author does not go to any great lengths to describe just what that might be. This at least permits more attention to the useful parts of the books rather than encouraging an outright rejection of the entire thing by all those readers, including this one, who do not see any particular form of corporatism or collectivism as an attractive alternative to any other one. It is the great futurological flaw of such books as this and those of Alvin Toffler that they are so embedded in the present that they will not deal with the experimental possibility of some social arrangement altogether different from any form of large-scale, centrally planned or coordinated collectivism.

Gross, to the credit of his obviously decent instincts, does see that concentrations of power have so far proven destructive of liberty no matter the motive. He is, for instance, now aware that even some of the legislation in which, as a very high level congressional staff functionary, he played a central role (the Employment Act of 1946; the Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment Act, passed in 1978) are wide open to exploitation as harsh control measures no matter the good that the authors intended them to do.

But that's as far as it goes. (It would be uncharitable and unfair not to point out that Gross goes, in this direction, a hell of a lot farther than most of his colleagues. He should, generally, be lauded for his journey. It is only for holders of an actually alternative vision that it seems proper and necessary to point out how short a trip it has been, no matter what else.) For instance, after more than 300 pages of convincing argument that Big Government and Big Business are moving together toward a regimented society, he comes up with these proposals, as close to concrete as any in the book:

- Inflation should be fought by a "serious" attempt "to manage the capitalist busines cycle" with "price stability and guaranteed jobs [part-time as well as full-time] for all."
- Decentralized planning can best be effected by siphoning power away from civil servants and professional advisers and pumping in "participation by citizens' movements."
- Profits—which he assumes throughout to be definable only in terms of the existing State-corporate collaboration of licensure, taxation, and protectionism—would be curtailed in his ideal society rather along the lines of the Swedish model, in which, "in return for losing some of their freedom over the use of profits, the larger corporations might gain . . . the opportunity to increase their aggregate profits."



Bertram Gross

The free-market proposition that such worrisome large corporations exist in State-supported defiance of, and not in consequence of, a truly free and open market, decentralized right down to the individual, has not yet attracted Professor Gross's attention except to worry him. In one chapter he asserts that purely local, individual-centered social arrangements lead to clique oppressionism. That market entry opportunities, commercial or social, competitive or cooperative, would also lead to diverse, volitional picking and choosing has not yet excited him.

Just how will he prevent the Department of Global Good, with the power to suppress tyranny, from oppressing everyone else?

Although society now suffers from the effects of large-scale corporatist and collectivist organization, large organizations will remain vital for the future, maintains Gross. In hewing to that firm line, he injects several useful reminders that even that widely regarded guru of the small-is-beautiful thesis, E. F. Schumacher, held onto the notion that some such organizations would remain forever necessary. They would be, of course, the ones needed to make sure that people use their freedom wisely. It is notable that Schumacher and Gross both gracefully sidestep the dilemma of a free society held together by organizations of real and overarching power supposedly confined solely to the doing of good. Like Plato, they prefer to assume that the trick will be turned by some mysterious force of good character among the elect.

A real problem may be that people coming to think of freedom at all are so depressed by their past experiences with authoritarianism that they fervently want guarantees, some Plan or Way to have freedom on a platter. An alternative vision is that being free is, face it, a whole lot of trouble and that the only guarantee it offers is your own basic responsibility to live it, love it, and sustain it—and watch it leave if you ever let up.

THE FRIENDS OF FASCISM

Ultimately, the most appalling fact of *Friendly Fascism* as a book and as a concept is that there is nothing in either that gets to the crux of the authoritarian proposition: coercion. The friendly fascists that are almost upon us would coerce, in Gross's view, in order to maintain their managerial authority, regulated markets, zooming profits, and a two-tiered society of the stratospheric rich and the brute, stunned, worker-consumer middle class. Gross, in turn, would coerce the managers to do good instead of being greedy. He would coerce local organizations to be neat instead of idiosyncratic and, depending on who lives there, swinish or saintly. The slogan that sums up such an urge is that of Saint Just in the French Revolution: "The people will be good or we will kill them." Gross wouldn't kill anybody, of course. But he certainly owes his decent and good mind a long contemplative session with the question of just how he will prevent the Department of Global Good, with the power to suppress tyranny, from oppressing everybody else.

(Continued on p. 34.)

SURFING THROUGH TIME

The author of *Future Shock* takes another look in his crystal ball.

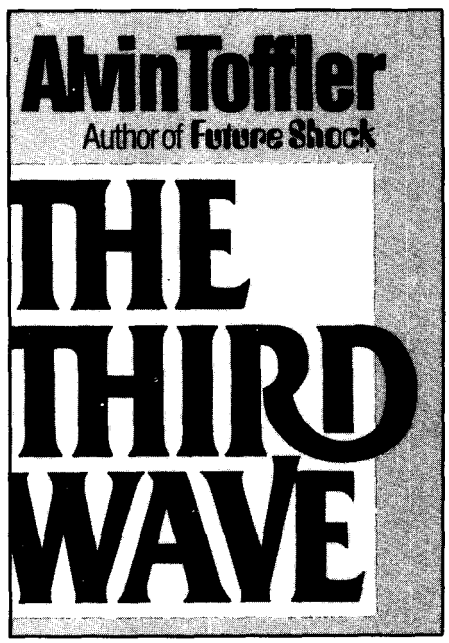
By Jerome Tuccille

The Third Wave.

By Alvin Toffler.
New York: William Morrow. 1980.
544 pp. $14.95.

WHEN YOU READ A BOOK BY ALVIN Toffler, you somehow get the impression that you are getting The Word directly from God. Toffler sounds as though he has been around since the beginning of time; he has observed the progress of the human race over the millenia and nothing, but *nothing,* has escaped his all-encompassing vision. Whether it is the attempt of some tribesman in far-off Papua to build a feeble fire or the effort of our European forebears to crank up the first industrial engine, Toffler has seen it all.

What we have here from the author of *Future Shock,* is, alas, more future schlock. The tone of *The Third Wave* can best be described as cosmic biblical. It reads as though Toffler decided one day that the Old Testament had grown rusty with age and,



since he had nothing better to do, he might as well sit down and give us an update. He could just as well have called his tendentious tome The Bible of Tomorrow.

It's not that one minds so much being lectured to on occasion. A few words of wisdom from an instructive master can be enlightening. But Toffler is such a humorless God. He is tedious and cranky. And he is a wrathful God, at best: either you accept his vision of tomorrow, or it is just too bad for you. You are doomed to be swept away with all the other blind reactionaries. No forgiveness is possible.

Just in case you've been leading a sheltered life and don't know what's been going on, the human race has been inundated by a couple of enormous waves over the centuries. These waves have been ripping from one side of the planet to the other, crashing and colliding, pulling the human race back and forth, battering civilization something awful. The first wave was the agricultural revolution, which commenced around 8,000 B.C., give or take a few decades, and then started cascading around the planet for 9,750 years until it started to lose its momentum in the late 18th century. The second wave was the industrial revolution, which started colliding with the first wave in 1750 or thereabouts, banging and slamming against the first wave and causing all

Christopher Brennan

kinds of conflict and grief, before it built up a head of steam of its own and kept on roaring right on down to the present day. Next came the third wave, a space age-technological-electronic revolution. This new wave started as a ripple back in 1955 and only now is starting to reach tidal wave proportions.

It would be easier for all of us if one wave left off before another one began. But, alas, these giant waves refuse to cooperate with humanity. There is the touchy problem of the overlap factor. A new wave kicks up while an old wave is still in the process of winding down, and this creates all sorts of turmoil for stubborn reactionaries who refuse to ride with the new trends. Believe it or not, there are those among us who want to hang on to the old waves; some of us even want to turn the clock back to the first wave, to the agricultural revolution, and forget about the second wave, industrialization, altogether.

These blind people who refuse to accept space age technology and lifestyles, who insist on swimming in the dying currents of the first and second waves, are not going to be around much longer though. The third wave is irresistible, you see. It's just starting to gather towering force and momentum. Pretty soon it will wash the first and second waves completely under, taking those who insist on surfboarding with them, and flood the entire planet. Third wave people who have learned to adapt to the new styles of working, loving, living, and politicking are going to do just fine. They will have learned to swim with the new tide and have nothing whatsoever to worry about.

All this would be great fun if the author had a shred of humor or irony in his makeup. But no. Just in case we miss the point he is making in the first thirty or forty pages, he proceeds to bombard the reader with a mind-numbing enumeration of detail that goes on and on for eternity, it seems. His choice of chapter titles is indicative of the pop-pretentious style he had utilized to hype up his message: The Technological Womb, The Vermilion Pagoda, The Integrational Engine, The Represento-Kit, The Ultimate Why, The Presto Effect, Kabuki Currency, The Sleepless Gorgon, Prosumer Lifestyles, The Cosmic Playroom, The Concept of Practopia, The Decisional Implosion, ad nauseam. All this is delivered up with great seriousness, mind you, without any hint that Toffler's tongue is lurking anywhere inside his cheek.

Those who are involved in politics will be pleased to know that their struggles have been more illusionary than real. Our notions about politics and government, individualism versus collectivism, socialism and capitalism have been rendered obsolete by the third wave. There never was any real difference between capitalism and socialism in the first place, you see. Both systems were variations of the same illusion, which Toffler calls the represento-kit. The components of this kit include citizens who are allowed to vote for representatives; legislatures such as parliaments, congresses, and assemblies; and executives who are called presidents, prime ministers, or party secretaries. The only difference between socialism or communism on one side and capitalism on the other is that, in for former system, there is only one political party to vote for while, under capitalism, there are two, three, or more to choose among. The end result is all the same really; we have been living under the illusion of freedom, but in fact we have all become victims of a now-obsolete industrial machine.

This industrial machine, the second wave, made people money-oriented and grasping. It created a giant invisible wedge between producers and consumers, between men and women, between the workplace and the home. This is true of both capitalist and socialist societies. This is now being changed, however, by the third wave revolution. The third wave is bringing us a new synthesis. Instead of electing representatives to govern us, we will be creating a semidirect democracy to govern ourselves. During the first wave we suffered under the dictatorship of the elite; in the second wave it was the dictatorship of the majority; from now on it's going to be a mini-majoritarian world where various minority groups vote electronically, synthesizing their interests into a miraculous new working majority. Under this new system we may allow some representatives to cast, maybe, 50 percent of the vote, but the rest of us folks out there, scattered about the planet, will cast the other 50 percent to pass laws that reflect the real interests of the people. Simply by sitting home and pushing a button in our living rooms we can synthesize our diverse interests and have a more equitable world society.

Toffler merely sketches the broad outlines of this third wave political system. He has done his job by showing us the way. Now it is up to us to read his handwriting on the wall and flesh in the details. Or else. After all, even the Lord God Almighty spoke only in parables. It is up to us mere mortals to figure them out. Correctly.

But enough. It is impossible to do full justice to this book in the space of a brief review. I have barely hinted at the full pretentiousness and pomposity of *The Third Wave*. Toffler's latest is a 500-page sleeping pill. Read it and treat yourself to a good month's snooze. ◧

Jerome Tuccille works for a securities firm and writes. His most recent investment book is Mind over Money, *and his biography of the Hunt brothers,* The Kingdom of Hunt, *will be published this spring.*

Hess

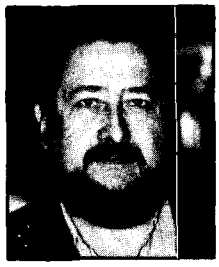
(Continued from p. 31.)

The anarchist answer—certainly venerable enough to deserve Gross's scholarly interest—has been always along the lines of withdrawing all sanctions from coercive institutions rather than worrying about curbing them after they get status and power. Modern libertarian answers add specific market alternatives.

Gross misses the possibilities of either because he unfailingly associates freedom with license and the market with State capitalism. Further, he does not yet care to come to grips with the idea of a stateless society, preferring instead to think of the good State instead of no State at all. But considering how far he has come since the days of his collaboration in the Capitol Hill *apparat,* I for one would not rule out the possibility that Professor Gross might next essay a look at liberty.

As it is, in *Friendly Fascism* he has done a fine job of collecting some of the evidence and symptoms of a development that is surely a major and real one. Just how accurate his predictions are could be seen as the presidential campaigning progressed and it became abundantly clear that neither of the front-running candidates would take a position in opposition to it. Carter, with his Trilateral Commission White House, his Rockefeller connections, and his own southern, plantation authoritarianism, is nowhere armored against the institution of some sort of native fascism, in the name of progress, except by his fortuitous ineptness. Reagan might have been because of his personal instincts as a thoroughly middle-class American, but such are the exigencies of politics and the horde of corporatist advisers who descended upon him that he could not see fascism where all his pals see progress and, especially, power. Also, maintaining an Imperial America—the commitment of both candidates—makes some sort of registered and eventually regimented society inevitable. There would have been no alternative—of course and needless to say—in Ted Kennedy, the virtual white knight of friendly fascism, of a society very well-regulated for oh such lovely, laudable purposes. Not one of them, and, sadly, not Professor Gross, is prepared to say, "Look, if we are going to be free, we are just going to have to take our lumps, get off the dole, get off the backs of people in other lands who should be given the whole job of running their own lives, and above all get off the idea that free people can lead a life of guaranteed outcome."

Fascism, friendly or fierce, is the obliteration of the possibility of being responsible for your own actions. So is the welfare state. So is State-capitalism. So is social democracy. So is socialism generally. So is every collectivism. And freedom, friendly or fierce, is the full restoration of the possibility of being responsible for your own actions—which include every conceivable form of volitional social arrangement! Professor Gross should be hailed for seeing the face of the former. He should be urged to see the possibilities of the latter; so far, he hardly glimpses it. ◧



Karl Hess, formerly active as a political operative in Washington, D.C., is now a homesteader, technology experimenter, and welder in West Virginia. His most recent book is Community Technology *(Harper & Row).*

TEACHING IS A _____ ACTIVITY

a. Subversive
b. Conserving
c. Neither of the above

By Louis Segesvary

Teaching as a Conserving Activity.

By Neil Postman.
New York: Delacorte Press. 1980.
224 pp. $9.95.

NEIL POSTMAN AND CHARLES WEINgartner were, with their smash hit book *Teaching as a Subversive Activity,* possibly the most celebrated advocates of the "new education" in the past decade. Deriding the notion of any form of education in which the teacher leads or guides, they promoted a "questions curriculum," which was to reflect the students' "needs and interests." In responding to such questions as "What do you worry about most?" and "What bothers you most about adults? Why?" students were to shape their own curriculums and find deliverance from "requirements," which the authors characterized as "systems of prescriptions and proscriptions intended solely to limit the physical and intellectual movement of students." The questions curriculum, with the teacher as companion, was to help students develop "survival skills" for a world of "future shock" by encouraging "meaning making."

Neil Postman

The notion of student-directed education caught on, in various degrees of implementation, to an astonishing degree in schools throughout the country. This success owed itself in considerable part to the fact that advocates of student-directed forms of education managed to cast themselves in a progressive light as the promoters of personal growth, freedom, tolerance, and profound concern for the future. Influential voices, such as those of the *New York Times, Playboy, Saturday Review,* and Marshall McLuhan, joined in a chorus affirming the role the players had created for themselves. Those opposed to what was being advanced were to find themselves repeatedly and involuntarily cast in the role of the sinner, who had committed what historian John Lukacs has noted is the "worst kind of intellectual (and social) sin" in modern America: "a preference for ideas, which instead of progressive, were reactionary ones."

In spite of all the innovations, however, the '70s were to bear witness to a strange phenomenon, all the more

remarkable because it took place in the world's most affluent society, which was spending well above $100 billion a year on education. Schools began producing increasing numbers of semi-illiterates whose inventory of survival skills ran so low that they couldn't properly fill out job application forms or perform simple arithmetical computations. The world of future shock was pounding on the door to be let in, and the shock troops that were being mustered up to meet the challenge had these impressive statistics to offer about their state of preparedness: one in five was functionally illiterate; they had compiled the lowest average for college board scores in 14 years; and those in their first year of college were reading at an average of four grade levels below their counterparts a decade before. In New York City, their diplomas, which should have certified some intellectual competence and achievement, were described by a former commissioner of education as nothing more than "certificates of attendance."

Not surprisingly, the public rebelled, spawning the "back to basics" movement. While ridiculed and repudiated by the educational establishment, the movement sustained and increased its momentum by clinging to the conviction that the community—that is, the tax-paying public—has a crucial role to play in determining the kind of education they are financing for their and others' children. For overwhelming numbers of parents, this meant achieving competency in the basic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic—at least that much. For many it also meant an end to what they perceived as social engineering in the classroom in the form of sex education and "values clarification" instruction.

STUNNING REVERSAL

Paradoxically, one of the voices now arguing for a return to a more traditional form of education is none other than Neil Postman himself. In his new book, *Teaching as a Conserving Activity* (written without Weingarten), he advocates a "thermostatic" educational philosophy in which "education tries to conserve tradition when the rest of the environment is innovative." This is necessary because

> *our own culture is overdosing on change... and the plain fact is that too much change, too fast, for too long has the effect of making social institutions useless and individuals perpetually unfit to live amid the conditions of their own culture.... The last thing that teaching needs to be in our present situation is revolutionary, ground breaking and highly charged with new values.*

Postman characterizes television as "the major educational enterprise now being undertaken in the United States." Since television teaches that "serious human worries are resolvable through relatively simple means," a schooling is needed that, in contradistinction, teaches that there is a "structure to ideas," that "they are built one upon another, and you must be able to comprehend lower orders of concepts before comprehending those of greater complexity."

One of the most stunning reversals in Postman's thought is with regard to school curriculum. He now charges that "school courses are reduced to twenty-minute modules so that children's attention will not wander. Required courses are eliminated and replaced with inconsequential electives.... There even develops a widespread interest in what are called 'alternative curriculums.' " Instead, the school curriculum should be "subject-matter-centered, word-centered, reason-centered, future-centered, hierarchical, secular, socializing, segmented, and coherent."

Postman is also critical, however, of the "back to basics movement." "As far as I understand it," he states,

> *this movement for educational reform has its origins in a genuinely felt dissatisfaction with the ability of the young to cope with digital symbolism, i.e., reading, writing, and arithmetic. The response to the problem is to place instruction, learning, and evaluation under the jurisdiction of a precise technical system so that at any point what is happening can be described in quantifiable terms. Moreover, any subject whose absorption does not lend itself to quantifiable description is, by definition, not regarded as basic. This is, of course the response of the technocrat.... In the usual "back to the basics" formulation of our problem, the solution lies in improving our statistics, not our students.*

But while Postman can rightly deplore increasing efforts in our society and schools to quantify and reduce to technical terms all forms of human behavior, he completely misreads the motivating power of the "back to basics" movement, which originated as a response to the influence of his works and those of his like-minded colleagues in the educational trade. Anyone who has spent time with parents concerned about the quality of education knows that foremost in their minds is the content of the school curriculum and the caliber of teaching personnel. There is concern not only for the traditional three Rs but also for teaching students to appreciate excellent literature and to acquire a historical understanding of the world.

Of course, when the members of a community do not believe that their children are being provided the kind

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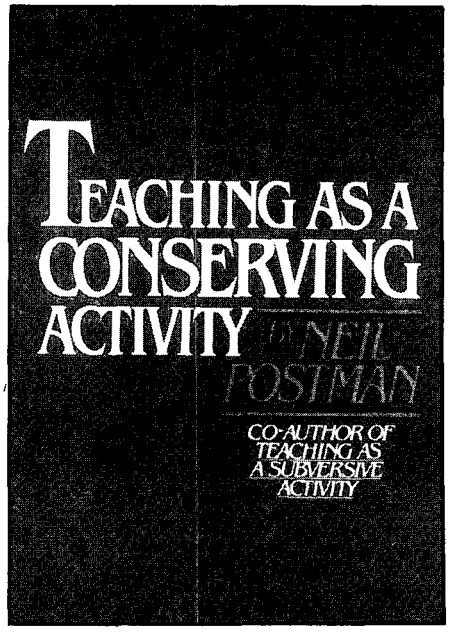

Only Postman knows why he doesn't admit to some genuine remorse for his contribution to the current educational chaos.

NO-FRILLS SOCIALISM

Has the economy become a zero-sum game?

By Thomas W. Hazlett

The Zero-Sum Society.

By Lester C. Thurow.
New York: Basic Books. 1980.
230 pp. $12.95.

LESTER THUROW WANTS TO ABOLISH minimum wage laws, rent controls, tariffs, price supports, antitrust witchhunts, corporate taxes, anti-pollution regulation, energy price controls and—just in case you were thinking about it—gasoline rationing. All in the name of what socialists call "economic justice."

Thurow's new tome, *The Zero-Sum Society,* is an ambitious attempt to (*a*) reformulate the political debate in post-welfare state America and (*b*) make the best-seller's list. He may, in fact, have already accomplished *b* and may yet advance to objective *a*. If so, the American debate will center on how to streamline statism.

Thurow's manuscript may have well been entitled "Socialism's Last Stand"; for the concessions Dr. Thurow, a practitioner of economic science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is willing to make to the "forces of reaction" are monumental indeed. In relentlessly attacking federal protectionism, environmental elitists, counterproductive "trust-busters," inept price controllers, evil special-interest subsidizers, and the rest, Thurow makes an entire generation of market-oriented economists reach for their best celebration brandy. See! Even Lester says "the market works."

Lester C. Thurow

SOCIALISM A LA CAPITALISM

We don't need Jeanne Dixon tuned in to deduce that this book will be quoted all over the place. See for yourself.

> *To adjust to a rapidly changing pattern of energy supplies, the energy industry needs to be deregulated. But eliminating regulations, protection and subsidies is also one of the essential ingredients in any successful program for stimulating economic growth. Because of its value elsewhere in the economy and because it involves the fewest net costs, the elimination of regulations, protection, and subsidies becomes the preferred route to controlling inflation. Upward price shocks are deliberately counterbalanced with planned [by deregulation] downward price shocks.*

Creeping capitalism?

Thurow does indeed dump the claims of last semester's socialists: that central planning was more efficient than wasteful competition, and the empirical boast that the Age of Abundance had arrived and the machinery that had produced it (capitalist tools) could be done away with at no cost. Thurow moves his cause to higher ground in devising a no-frills socialism. It would eliminate the evils of price control, protec-

tionism, and overregulation—so that the Internal Revenue Service could have oodles more to play with. While free-market advocates see interventionism as the great club by which consumers, workers, and entrepreneurs are deprived of ever-greater fruits, Thurow sheds his tears for the tax collector. Government-induced inefficiency *has* hurt the US economy, and that leaves less wealth for bureaucrats (and MIT professors) to redistribute.

How Thurow is able to exercise such concerns for economic efficiency in the last part of his book is not at all clear, however, in its beginning. He digs in with an analysis long on conclusions but rather skimpy on facts. He notes that the United States now trails Switzerland, Denmark, West Germany, and Sweden in per capita income, with fast-running Japan only seven percent behind us. Thurow believes that our drop in the standings creates a *perceived* problem but that history belies any real problem. He calmly observes that US "per capita income growth since the advent of government intervention has been more than twice as high as it was" previously. And our current growth rate is still healthy—a 16 percent real per capita growth between 1972 and 1978. He does not deal with *federal government* statistics which today show the average American worker's real, after-tax paycheck *smaller* than it was a *decade* ago.

Here Thurow must skate on thin ice. He wants to address the severe—possibly terminal—maladies that infect the political economy of 1980 America. But he decidedly does not want to admit any correlation between them and the last generation of Lester Thurows—the very economists and policymakers who have produced the very crisis that Thurow frets over as a zero-sum society (modeled on a zero-sum game, in which the gains of the winners are precisely equal to the losses of the losers; in the economic realm, it means that one person's prosperity is another's poverty). And it's only zero sums that lie ahead: While "our economic problems are solvable,...all these solutions have the characteristic that someone must suffer large economic losses. No one wants to volunteer for this role, and we have a political process that is incapable of forcing anyone to shoulder this burden." Thurow's mission is to find a way to force them.

Lester C. Thurow

The Zero-Sum Society

Distribution and the Possibilities for Economic Change

We have always had two sides to the coin: the positive-sum game of the voluntary marketplace; the negative-sum game of the government trough.

In this he clearly fails—he all but forgets it, in fact. Decrying the way special-interest unions and corporations manipulate the legislature to deal out regulations whose primary effect is not to regulate but to transfer wealth in their direction, Thurow "resolves" our dilemma by advocating across-the-board deregulation and free trade, allowing wealth redistribution to be achieved only by virtue of honest, straight-out welfare checks. In other words, if we want to subsidize truckers, let's first abolish the Interstate Commerce Commission and then send them all a monthly T-bill. (That distortion of prices in the labor market—that is, wealth redistribution—can foul up the process whereby resources are used the way consumers want them just as surely as will the ICC's current regulations—this is not a problem Thurow chooses to ponder.)

Now, if the purpose of America's welfare state *were* to subsidize the poor, why then Mr. Thurow would not only be taken seriously; he would be on the waiting list for Mt. Rushmore. Yet he will only remain a humble economist and computer jockey, for the raison d'être of the Washington, D.C., tax-a-thon has never been and will never be to get the poor out of poverty. The bureaucrats and the poor are often on good terms, of course; they do need each other, so far as the power-brokers are concerned, anyway. But if the poor were the bona fide object of Washington's concern, you would not find regulations that raise energy prices, nor licensing laws that prohibit upward mobility, nor upper-class subsidies for education and the arts, nor trade barriers that are *designed* to raise consumer prices, nor minimum wages, nor any of the other countless oppressive bylaws that lay the heaviest karate-chops ever fashioned on the necks of the ghetto entrepreneur, worker, and consumer.

PLUSES AND MINUSES

If socialism could itself be taken seriously, it would, as Thurow suggests, rely on capitalism to achieve the means whereby the ends of prosperous equality could be realized. That what we have, from the New Deal to Richard Nixon, is the politics of private advantage in the name of public good, might be a tip we should examine more closely.

In the end, our society has not become a zero-sum game. What we have always had are two sides to the coin: the positive-sum game of the voluntary marketplace; the negative-sum game of the government trough. Just as Adam Smith's brilliant *Wealth of Nations* set our sights upon the fortuitous gains accruing when two people trade and simultaneously *both* become better off, it may as clearly be shown that government's "trades" are *less than* zero sum. If in period one Mr. A. is taxed $100, which is given to Mr. B., in period two Mr. A. will work less to *produce,* and Mr. B. will work more to *take* (or to beat out the newly formed competition for welfare—perhaps from Mr. A. himself!).

In short, there are very few zero-sum games in real life. They inevitably turn out to have consequences beyond that quarter's scoreboard.

People are not just reactors but thinkers and schemers, and they will figure out a game plan to their best advantage in the next round. As F. A. Hayek warned so presciently in *The Road to Serfdom,* economic security can only be gained by *some* through government—by making economic life less wealthy and more risky for *others* who are not so protected. How Professor Hayek must be purring to see even socialists recognizing the trade-offs of state largesse in the 1980s.

In pouncing on the Disneyland delusions of the "antigrowth" lobby, Thurow concludes:

While some see a no-growth society as a happier, less competitive society, this is hardly an outcome that is foreordained. With few opportunities for advancement the economy might become less competitive. But the reverse is probably more likely. Where at least some of our energies were previously used to enlarge the economic pie, all of our energies can now be devoted to dividing a pie that has stopped growing. We know from other zero-sum areas of life that they can be some of our most competitive activities. Sporting events and gambling are zero-sum activities, yet they are marked by intense cutthroat competition. 'Kill, kill, kill' is a not unknown sporting cheer."

As inflation, taxes, and regulation ravage our pie with ever-bigger bites, and as the private sector's positive-sum game continues to be devoured by Washington's negative sum, those cheers can only get louder. But the roar should not be allowed to drown out those voices who, like Smith and Hayek, could see that the world of dog-eat-dog need not be. ◧

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Segesvary

(Continued from p. 36.)

of education that prepares them to be competent and productive members of society, it should not be surprising to see demands for accountability, which can lead to various forms of testing yielding numerical indexes for competency in reading, general knowledge, and mathematics. But to say that such scores are the entire purpose of the "back to basics" movement is to miss the point entirely. The thrust of this movement has been for more effective and responsible instruction of basic skills and knowledge—basic in the sense of being essential for survival in our society. And if the movement has at times seemed to lack sophistication and appeared too single-minded, it has nevertheless drawn public attention to the crucial questions concerning what should be taught in public schools and who should control them.

EDUCATIONAL CONSUMERISM

One of the most refreshing features of Postman's current thought is his rejection of what has been described as social engineering in the schools. In the case of sex education, for example, he maintains that it is "sheer insolence and patronizing insolence at that, that the schools have even proposed to deal with these matters." He argues further that the notion that "the school must assume responsibility for every aspect of a child's development is self-defeating nonsense." While schools should be "healthy and just environments . . . we must not expect schools to be psychiatric clinics or teachers to be effective social workers and political reformers." He also suggests that it is unrealistic to think that schools can provide children with motivation to learn, for while a "teacher who inspires confidence, gives encouragement, and exudes warmth and understanding will facilitate learning," only parents can provide children with the "emotional and social preparation for school learning." These observations are a sharp departure from his previous assertion that schooling should be concerned with the "whole child."

In conclusion, *Teaching as a Conserving Activity* is a welcome addition to the current literature repudiating the carelessness and excess of the trendy educational currents prevailing in the '60s and '70s. The victims are all around us. Postman now describes his earlier work as having "joined in the fun." Only he knows why he doesn't admit to some genuine remorse for his contribution to the current educational chaos. Doing so would have increased his moral stature with the reading public and allayed any suspicions that he is merely hitching his wagon to the new star in the sky to avoid being left behind. Somehow his grinning countenance on the back of his new book's cover is at odds with the grim reality of the vast numbers of the educationally impaired young people he helped to spawn. Considering the slip-shod philosophy the old Postman was promoting, however, it is good to have the new model under just about any terms.

But there is something more important to consider in the metamorphosis of Postman than the affirmation of common sense. There is the sober fact that the public has placed itself too much at the mercy of self-styled educational innovators during the past two decades. How many Postmans have to undergo metamorphoses before consumers of education are offered something that is responsive to their desires? Must a community continue financing an educational system that responds to public outrage only when pressed to the wall? Why shouldn't parents be able to use the tax dollars they currently must hand over to the public educational system for the schooling of their choice for their children? These are some of the tough questions posed, however unwittingly, between the lines of Postman's new book. ◧

Louis Segesvary recently joined the Foreign Service and formerly taught in the Department of Defense school system in Germany. His most recent article in REASON was "Can't Read, Can't Write, Can't Calculate" (Sept. 1979), which analyzed the effects of Teaching as a Subversive Activity.

UTILITARIAN PROBLEMS

Does "the greatest good for the greatest number" resolve tough issues like abortion and animal rights?

By Eric Mack

Practical Ethics.

By Peter Singer. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press. 1979. 233 pp. $27.50/$6.95.

ACCORDING TO THE ETHICAL DOCtrine of utilitarianism, the good is pleasure or satisfaction and the bad is pain or dissatisfaction. The greater the balance of good over bad in the world, the better the world is, morally speaking. Morality consists in making the world as much better as we can. So right action consists in producing the best overall balance of pleasure or satisfaction over pain or dissatisfaction. In short, morally we each should do what produces the largest net heap of goodness. This, of course, is the doctrine of the greatest good for the greatest number.

This apparently simple and neatly mathematical doctrine has long been on the defensive within philosophical circles. Especially within the last decade, more and more philosophers have taken to heart objections that have repeatedly been raised against utilitarianism. These objections have always focused on the fact that horrendous actions may be productive of the best overall social balance of good over bad. In such a case, utilitarianism would morally require the horrendous action.

One standard example is the framing of an innocent person in order to stop a snowballing crime wave. Another is the infliction of public torture on a few in order to satisfy the sadistic cravings of the many. A third is the forced redistribution of property from individuals who have earned it to others who would be more happy having that property. The ultimate point of all examples of this sort is that there are considerations of justice, of desert, of rights, which utilitarianism with its single-minded focus on aggregate net result must ignore.

Another major factor in the retreat of utilitarianism has been the increased interest among philosophers in specific moral problems—abortion, civil disobedience, euthanasia, paternalism, and so on. Utilitarianism has generally been thought to be especially inept at illuminating the complex face-to-face choices that such issues involve.

MORAL STATUS

There are, however, philosophers and others who stand by utilitarianism. Peter Singer is among them. In particular, Singer's *Practical Ethics* attempts to demonstrate its fruitfulness when applied to real-world moral issues. Singer is especially concerned with life and death issues—with the killing of nonhuman animals, with abortion, with euthanasia, and with starvation. Many of his conclusions will be shocking to conventional sensibilities, and it is a testimony to the clarity of his exposition that at least some of these shocking conclusions are rendered plausible.

Is there anything Singer can say, however, in general defense of the utilitarian perspective? Why, after all, should anyone believe that his or her moral purpose is the greatest good of the greatest number? Because, says Singer, "ethical judg-

ments must be made from a universal point of view," which means "that my own interests cannot, simply because they are *my* interests, count more than the interests of anyone else." To be ethical, therefore, individuals must forgo their own self-interest. The central assumption of this argument is that, in order to be partial to oneself or one's own purposes, one must presuppose that one has some special moral status. Then, since such a presupposition violates the universal character of ethics, any partiality to oneself or one's own purposes is unethical.

But the central assumption is false. A moral doctrine that allows or requires one to be partial in some way to oneself or one's own purposes need not presuppose a special moral status for oneself: one can allow that others equally may or must be partial to themselves or to their own purposes. Thus, the view that each ought to advance his own long-term interest is fully universalizable. It ascribes no special moral status to any individual. Similarly, the view that each possesses certain natural rights and may exercise these rights in any way that does not violate the similar rights of others is fully universalizable. Yet the first of these requires and the second permits individuals to be partial to their own well-being and goals.

Singer himself half-recognizes that the universal character of morality does not specifically point to utilitarian conclusions. He allows that "there are other ethical ideals—like individual rights, the sanctity of life, justice, purity and so on—which are universal in the required sense." Yet he goes on to assert that focusing on this universal character permits one to "very swiftly arrive at an *initially* utilitarian position." This is disingenuous. Nothing in the argument justifies arriving initially at any one of many incompatible universalizable ethical positions. Furthermore, to arrive at utilitarianism initially is to arrive at it permanently, for all proposed departures toward alternative theories will have to be rejected on the grounds that theories so distant from and incompatible with utilitarianism could not be correct.

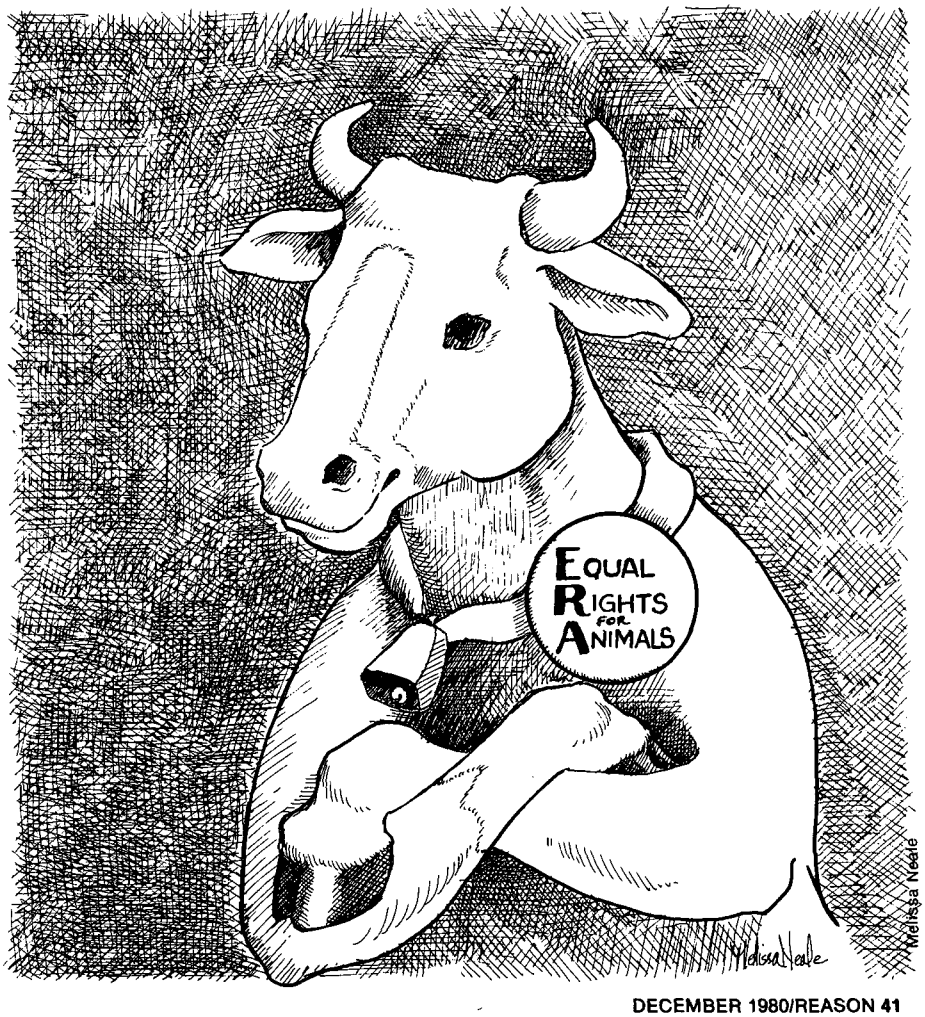
On the utilitarian point of view, what is morally significant about persons is not their rationality, their capacity for choice, or even their capacity for moral and immoral action. Rather, what is significant is their capacity for experiencing pleasure and pain and satisfaction and dissatisfaction. These capacities, however, are quite fully shared with (at least) all higher members of the animal kingdom. So utilitarians have always been most open to considering the experience of all sentient beings as intrinsically morally significant.

NON-HUMANS, NEAR-HUMANS

In *Practical Ethics* Singer continues the argument, begun in his previous *Animal Liberation,* that our current treatment of animals, especially their inhumane production and slaughter for food, generates far more pain than pleasure and must therefore be condemned. The pleasures that some human beings derive from eating flesh cannot overbalance the pain inflicted in the process of providing this flesh.

Is there any fundamental difference between the killing of a human being and, say, a cow? There are two differences to which Singer can point, but neither seems to be fundamental. The first is that cows are generally unaware of the policy of killing cows; so at least until they enter the slaughter pens they do not live in fear and anxiety. Since rational beings such as most members of the species *homo sapiens* would, however, become aware of a (non-secret) policy of killing humans, such a policy would produce fear and anxiety. The second difference is that rational self-conscious beings not only prefer pleasure to pain and satisfaction to dissatisfaction; they also tend to prefer continued life to death. The satisfaction of this somewhat special preference is to be counted within Singer's utilitarian calculations. These two factors make the moral cost of killing rational self-conscious beings somewhat greater—how much greater is hard to say—than the moral cost of killing cows.

We can easily see here that neither of these special considerations against killing rational self-conscious beings applies to the killing of fetuses. In-



deed, according to Singer, at relatively early pre-sentient stages, fetuses have no moral standing whatsoever. As sentience appears, fetuses acquire some moral standing. Still, "the calf, the pig and the much derided chicken come out well ahead of the fetus at any stage of pregnancy." Although for Singer the intrinsic evil of killing an advanced fetus is as great as the evil of killing a fish or perhaps even a chicken, this does not imply that Singer condemns abortion. For the benefits to be gained from the killing of unwanted or endangering fetuses are vastly greater than those gained from the killing of fish or chickens.

It will be noted that infants also are not self-conscious or rational. Therefore, they cannot have a desire for continued life and cannot be made anxious by a policy of killing infants. So, Singer concludes, the killing of an infant involves no more intrinsic evil than the killing of that much-derided chicken. Infants, of course, are often highly valued by their parents, which provides an extrinsic reason for not killing them. Usually, then, infants should not be killed for the same reason that beloved pets should not be killed. When they are not so valued but rather are the source of pain and the frustration of interests, the utilitarian calculation justifies infanticide.

WHICH SATISFACTION?

Utilitarianism prescribes the creation of the largest net heap of satisfactions. But abortions prevent persons from coming into existence with lives involving a certain amount of satisfaction. Should not the amount of satisfaction thereby lost to the world count against allowing abortions? Singer's argument in favor of abortion tacitly assumes that it should not. Similarly, on Singer's view, the happiness of persons who could be created but do not yet exist does not count as a factor in favor of their creation. In short, as far as persons are concerned, Singer opts for what he calls the "prior existence" version of utilitarianism: it is the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the interests of *already existing* people that counts.

This "prior existence" stance is apparently helpful to Singer in deflecting another traditional charge against utilitarianism—that it views individuals as replaceable units. For instance, it is often pointed out that if total results are what count, then if I could painlessly kill one person but also create another person whose prospects were as happy as the deceased, my act would be morally neutral, for it would have no net effect on the balance of satisfactions. So it seems that if total results count, people are replaceable. A person is just a receptacle for certain satisfactions, and any similar receptacle is just as good from the so-called moral point of view. In opting for the "prior existence" version, however, Singer can claim that my killing would be wrong because it undercuts the satisfactions of an already existing person, and the similar satisfactions introduced into the world by my creation of a replacement do not counterbalance this loss.

Why, after all, should anyone believe that his or her moral purpose is the greatest good of the greatest number?

But how can Singer justify the "prior existence" stance? To some extent he believes that it is the desire for continued life in self-conscious beings that rules out replaceability. Yet the creation of another whose desire to continue living will be satisfied does, from the utilitarian moral perspective, completely compensate for the death of a self-conscious being. Alternatively, Singer invokes the idea that self-conscious individuals "are individuals, leading lives of their own" and that this is why they are not replaceable. This sounds far more plausible. And, fittingly, it has no place at all within any utilitarian theory. For this claim is nothing short of the insight that for each person his own life and purposes are special and that, from the special perspective of each lived existence, replacement is never sufficient compensation. So Singer's attempt to justify "prior existence" utilitarianism involves, in reality, an abandonment of utilitarianism.

To fail to redistribute resources that would prevent death and suffering, claims Singer, is to *cause* that death and suffering.

In a final application of utilitarianism, Singer urges vastly greater aid, both private and governmental, to prevent starvation and malnutrition around the world. The cost to me of giving up color TV, dinners out, and so on is very much less than the benefits that could be provided to others with the money used to support my luxuries. Hence, this is part of my utilitarian duty.

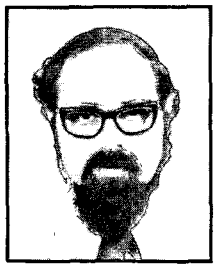
Assuming that relief would have the projected effects (a large assumption), this is a thoroughly sound argument—given the utilitarian premise. Singer, however, also seeks to press this radically redistributive conclusion upon those who do not share this shaky moral premise. He does this by claiming that there is no intrinsic difference between killing and letting die. Letting another die when I could save that person is just another (often less direct and less malicious) form of killing. Thus, to fail to redistribute resources that would prevent death and suffering is to cause that death and suffering.

Singer, however, is gravely mistaken in equating the failure to aid with the infliction of harm. What happens to the distressed Indian beggar whom I do not aid is not a consequence of my omission. We can see this by noting that the unhappy outcome suffered by the beggar would have occurred even if I did not exist. So neither my existence nor any of the activities that make it up can be among the conditions bringing about the beggar's demise.

Singer has a response to this argument: "It is true that the person would have died even if I had never existed, but what is the relevance of that? The fact is that I do exist, and the consequentialist will say that our responsibilities derive from the world as it is, not as it might have been." But this response does miss the relevant point. By showing that some

outcome would have occurred even without my existence, I do show that it does not depend upon me. So even though the facts are that I do exist and that I could have averted the starvation, we cannot conclude that I *cause* the outcome that would have occurred just the same had I never seen the light of day.

Here, as in his general arguments for utilitarianism, Singer fails to establish that each of us should forgo our own happiness when this would advance net, cross-species, global satisfaction. Utilitarianism has been put to the test of real-world problems, but it doesn't pass. ◧



Eric Mack teaches philosophy at Tulane University. He recently spent a semester's leave of absence in Denmark working on the foundations of natural rights theory and the nature of freedom.

Wilson

(Continued from p. 29.)

universe to universe looking for a safe and suitable place to settle, arguing all the way and alternating command of their vocalizing, computerized craft, Gay Deceiver. At first the alternate universes appear to be simply that—variations on the world we live in. For instance, they hop to a world almost identical to ours except for the fact that there is no letter *J* in the alphabet there. They visit a Mars (remember, they can travel along spatial as well as temporal axes) that has a breathable atmosphere and has become a penal colony for the Russian and British Empires. (The United States is still a British colony.) And then there's a strange, inverted universe, almost like a Klein bottle. No *real* surprises yet.

Then they arrive in the Land of Oz. No, not someplace *like* Oz, but L. Frank Baum's Oz, complete with Glinda, Scarecrow, Pumpkinhead, and the rest. This was my favorite sequence in the book, and all too brief. I was as moved as Deety when she learned that all the Oz characters knew her because of all the time she had spent reading the books. And an especially nice touch was the instant friendship that developed between the computerized Gay Deceiver and—who else?—Tik-Tok.

From there they hop to Lilliput, then to an English-style countryside where they watch a white rabbit in coat and tails rush by, followed by a little blonde girl in a pinafore. Then they jump to interstellar space and run into one of E. E. Smith's Lensmen, and so on.

Eventually they come to the realization that many of the more than 1.03 x 10^{28} universes of Jake's theory are inhabited by fictional characters to whom their own world is *the* real world. Which leads to the unsettling question: Are our travelers fictional characters in a book in one of the universes they've yet to visit? (Heinlein slips you the answer, but you've got to be alert to catch it.) Eventually they arrive in Heinlein's own future history and meet up with the infamous Lazarus Long.

WHO WILL LIKE IT?

Heinlein is obviously having a ball with *The Number of the Beast,* and if you're in no great hurry you can catch a scenic ride with him. On a deeper level, he is exploring the qualities of leadership—the duties, drawbacks, and responsibilities of taking command of a group of people. But I have a caveat, and it's a major one: you're going to have trouble with this book if you're not a science fiction fan. And by "fan" I don't mean someone who has read some Bradbury, seen *Star Wars* twice, and catches all the reruns of *Star Trek;* I mean someone who has a solid grounding in science fiction, who reads *lots* of it. Otherwise you're going to miss innumerable puns and in-jokes, and the epilogue will leave you completely baffled.

I also have a gripe: the dialogue. One of the author's own characters sums it up best. Near the middle of the book, Zeb Carter says, "Yack, yack, yack, argue, fuss and jabber—a cross between a Hyde Park open forum and a high school debating society." At the slightest provocation, anyone—or all four—of the characters will run off at the mouth. I tend to like books with lots of dialogue, especially the terse, bare-bones style Gregory McDonald uses in his Fletch books; but this...this is too much to take at times.

The narrative style may give a few readers pause. Heinlein tells everything in the first person but shifts from character to character; so you have to reorient yourself to the narrative *I* as you move from section to section. Fortunately, the publisher has headed each page with the name of the current point-of-view character, and this helps a lot.

A word about the artwork. When I heard that Richard Powers was going to be illustrating the book, I thought it was a terrible choice—too surreal; okay for a cover, but not for a bunch of black and whites. I was wrong. Powers has done over 50 illustrations for *The Number of the Beast,* and they are *perfect*! The human figures are lush and full of character, and the background surrealism is just right for the text it reflects.

All in all, an excellent value for $6.95. A classy package. If you're one of those who say that Robert A. Heinlein hasn't written anything decent since *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* (and there are a fair number of those), you'll think any price too high. But if you liked *Time Enough for Love,* you'll love *The Number of the Beast.* ◧

F. Paul Wilson has appeared in Analog, Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine, Fiction, Startling Mystery Stories, *and other magazines. His science fiction novels include* Healer, Wheels within Wheels, An Enemy of the State, *and* The Keep *(forthcoming).*

M. Brodkey

If we believe that moral excellence should be encouraged, why should we not use government to promote it? The answer in short is that what we understand by moral excellence is logically inconsistent with making laws to produce it. For it is a kind of excellence that does not consist in a set of goals which everyone ought to pursue, or a pattern to which all men should conform. It consists in each man's ability to make a coherent, self-sufficient life for himself in his own way among other men, while meticulously respecting the efforts of others to do the same.

—Shirley Robin Letwin,
"The Morality of the Free Man"

A UCLA economist talks about blacks and the marketplace, women and work, freedom and equality.

Photos by Peg Owens

REASON INTERVIEW:

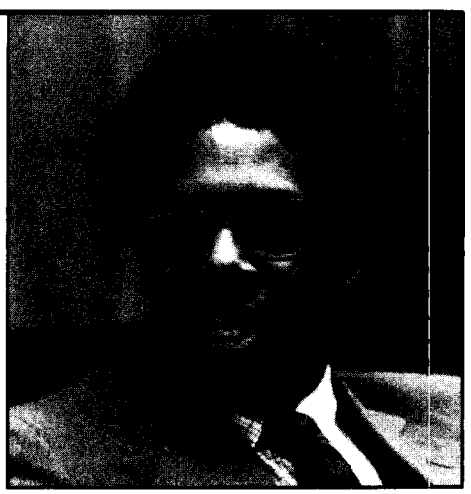
THOMAS SOWELL

"Thomas Sowell is probably America's most distinguished black social scientist. An economist by training and profession—currently professor of economics at U.C.L.A.—he is better known to a wider public for his cogent and unorthodox writings on such controversial issues as education, I.Q. tests, affirmative action and ethnicity. In his new book, Professor Sowell tries to embrace these and other social-policy concerns within a unified theoretical perspective that derives primarily from free-market economics."

So began the New York Times Book Review *article on Thomas Sowell's latest book,* Knowledge and Decisions.

Tom Sowell is everything the subject of an interview should be. He's bright—Harvard bachelor's degree, Columbia master's, University of Chicago doctorate: about as blue-blooded as you can get for an economist. He's prolific—among his books: Race and Economics, Classical Economics Reconsidered, Say's Law, Black Education; *his professional papers include a highly respected treatment of Marxist theory. And whenever he speaks, people listen—often in shock. Sowell has attacked affirmative action, busing, statistical analyses of "equality," minimum wage laws, labor unions, welfare, you name it... because he is convinced these gratuities hurt rather than help minorities. As the failures of America's experiment with federal largesse as a solution to poverty become increasingly embarrassing for the Washington wizards, and overwhelmingly tragic for the poor, this country could do no better than to exploit the insight, courageously advanced, of social theorist Thomas Sowell, interviewed here by* REASON *contributor Thomas Hazlett and senior editor Manuel Klausner.*

Persons like myself who grew up in the ghetto are regarded as middle-class or aberrant, whereas people like Andrew Young who grew up in the lap of affluence are said to truly speak for blacks.



REASON: Let's jump right into your area of expertise—ethnic economics. Recently the Urban League published a report claiming that "black America ended the decade of the 1970s in a less favorable position than it began the 1970s." That's a very dramatic statement. Is it true?

SOWELL: I have looked very closely at the numbers. It depends on whether you are talking about families or individuals. If the families are worse off, are they worse off only in the sense that higher standards of living have caused the family to disaggregate itself? That is, as income goes up in a poor family, do people begin to live in their own separate places and therefore you have two poor families, where you had one before, each of which was lower income than the previous family—even though in point of fact on a per capita basis the income has gone up? So you see, you have a lot of tricky problems like that to deal with.

But if it's so, I would think that would be a reason for the Urban League and most of the civil rights organizations to drastically reconsider their own policy positions. Because it's been after a whole decade of policy that they have been advocating, notably affirmative action, that this has all happened. I have argued elsewhere that far more progress took place under the equal opportunity phase of the civil rights movement than has taken place under the affirmative action phase.

REASON: You have claimed that it is actually white intellectuals rather than the mass of black Americans who favor these things, like busing, affirmative action, race quotas, and antidiscrimination laws in employment. But why shouldn't blacks as a group favor these things, just as special interest groups tend to favor whatever is in their personal interest?

SOWELL: One of the reasons is that blacks as a group are not really the same as, say, a trade association or labor union. They are not organized that way. And I think blacks think of themselves as being part of the society, and when things are wrong in principle for the society, then blacks as members of the society lose. I think there is more narrow self-interest also, insofar as affirmative action in particular has undermined part of the respect that blacks would otherwise have gotten for advancement.

REASON: If you could change three things, add or repeal a total of three laws in Washington, with the goal of raising the standard of living of blacks, what would you do?

SOWELL: Oh, I guess repeal the minimum wage law. And then... I'm trying to figure out how to get rid of all the occupational licensing laws in one fell swoop.

REASON: What about applying the antitrust laws to break up licensure laws?

SOWELL: That wouldn't be a repeal, but... I suppose the best thing to do would be to get rid of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

REASON: Now that's two departments.

SOWELL: Yes. Well, my theory of how to get rid of poverty is to hold a meeting of all the leading experts on poverty somewhere in the middle of the Pacific and not let them go home for 10 years. When they came back, they would discover there was no more poverty.

REASON: Why do so many people who appear to have the best interests of black people at heart pursue such counterproductive policies?

SOWELL: That is really the $64,000 question. Partly, I think, because it takes a certain sophistication to understand how these things that look like they're good don't work out that well. People tend to think always of transaction terms rather than how many transactions will take place. They want to set up a situation where people will be paid more for a given job, and they don't think in terms of how many jobs will there be, as a result of this very law. So now you may end up with a great number of people with a hypothetical right to a higher rate of pay in a job that they can't get. But it looks good at the given moment—you're going to help the poor increase their income—and that I think is one of the key reasons you get these kinds of laws.

Then, of course, there are many people with hidden agendas. Sometimes they are even hidden from themselves. They talk in terms of alleviating poverty and so forth, but it very quickly slides into something called income distribution. And I don't think most people in the United States really give a damn about income distribution. They are concerned about making sure that kids don't go to bed hungry, making sure that families don't live in houses that leak, have rats, and things like that. I don't think most Americans give a damn whether

My theory of how to get rid of poverty is to hold a meeting of all the leading experts on poverty somewhere in the middle of the Pacific and not let them go home for 10 years.

plumbers make more than dentists or dentists make more than plumbers. That's an income distribution question. What most people are concerned about is preventing privation in the country. But one of the great coups that has been scored on the left has been to identify those two things and to use all the concern over privation to centralize power in their hands to determine who shall get what, anywhere in the society.

REASON: Now you have had an opportunity yourself on a personal level to talk with people who are in the public eye and are pursuing affirmative action and busing and so on. You're a scientist, you've studied it, you're black, you grew up in Harlem. What is their reaction to you personally?

SOWELL: [Laughs] It's amazing how many people will say, "That's an odd guy." It's ironic that persons like myself and Walter Williams, who grew up in the ghetto, are regarded as being either middle-class or just aberrant, whereas people like Andrew Young, who grew up in the lap of affluence, are said to truly speak for blacks. It's one of the great ironies. If you look at the leading blacks in top positions with the government—Thurgood Marshall, Secretary of the Army Clifford Alexander, Andrew Young—these are people who came from families who have been going to college for generations, longer than most whites in the United States, and yet very often they are regarded as much more authentic.

REASON: To the extent that the market is color blind, why does there seem to be so much hostility toward it among leading members of minority group organizations?

SOWELL: I guess most of those organizations are in fact composed of that kind of people—middle-class people, middle-class for generations. And that offers them a much faster upward movement than the market would offer them. I'm not sure what Andrew Young would be doing in the market, but clearly as a black leader, so-called, he has a lot more going for him.

REASON: Do you have any explanation for general middle-class hostility to the market?

SOWELL: I'm not sure how generalized it is in the middle class. I know among *academics* there is enormous hostility, partly because power is not in *their* hands. One of the problems with the market from the standpoint of those who think that they are the brightest, the best, and ought to be telling the rest of us groundlings what to do, is that the market allows ordinary people to go out there and make their own decisons. And people who think they have the Truth and the Light don't want that; they want no part of that. It's really what they hate most, I think, about a market system.

REASON: An interesting development occurred a couple of years ago when the NAACP's Energy Policy Committee came out essentially for decontrol of energy production. White liberals and the press accused the group of being bought off by big oil. Are there racist overtones to the white liberal view of what blacks should say?

SOWELL: I think there is a certain kind of white liberal who speaks of "our black citizens" in a somewhat possessive way that goes against the spirit of the 13th Amendment. [Laughter] There's always the charge of betrayal in these kinds of alliances. Unfortunately, it's not as surprising as it is disgusting.

REASON: Where did you develop your individualist views?

SOWELL: Oh, I don't know. I suppose if I gave one turning point it would be when I took a job in the government, in the Labor Department, in 1960. When I saw all these ideas I believed in, being put into practice I became horrified. When I heard them criticized in the classroom in Chicago, that was really abstract.

REASON: Am I getting this right—you developed views of individualism at the US Department of Labor?

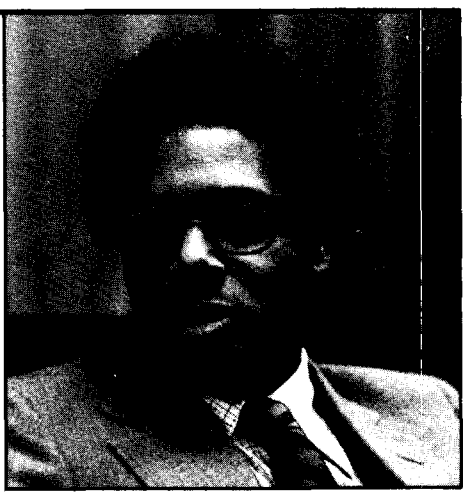
SOWELL: Yes. [Laughter] Because you realize it when you see the opposite in practice. And I have a feeling that a lot of people who today are called conservative, libertarian, or what have you, are people who started out on the far left as I did. At Harvard I was considered a Marxist, and my first year at Chicago I was on the far left.

REASON: How do you characterize yourself today?

SOWELL: I try not to. I guess I would be a person who dissents from the current liberal orthodoxy, largely from what I would consider to be a radical democratic perspective, namely, that there is no group of people who have either so much greater intelligence or so much greater morality that they ought to be trusted with running the lives of the rest of us.

REASON: To what extent would you consider yourself a libertarian?

History is absolutely irrevocable, no matter who is in office, and the people who most need compensation for sins committed against them are long since dead.



SOWELL: I find much to agree with. My only real fear is that we would have this wonderful society which would last 15 minutes, until the Soviet ICBMs landed. I'm not sure it would be quite that short a time horizon, but I wouldn't want to achieve the ideal society that I believe in, just in time to see it blown up before my very eyes.

REASON: Libertarians are not generally pacifists and believe the most efficient defense would be provided on a market basis....

SOWELL: I have a great deal of trouble with that. See, I don't believe that the market is really magic. The market operates where property rights can be and have been defined. I'm not sure that there can be property rights in survival, where it may be indivisible. That is, you have the free rider problem. If I'm going to sit here in Los Angeles and be protected, I may not be willing to vote for the price of protecting me.

REASON: In *Race and Economics* you compare the financial status of West Indian blacks living in the United States to that of native American blacks. What is the comparison, and what does it lead you to conclude?

SOWELL: The incomes of West Indian blacks are much higher than those of native blacks here in the United States. In fact, I have done some research since then that puts the difference at about 44 percent. West Indian blacks have incomes that are quite comparable to the national average, and if you look at the second generation they make higher incomes than the national average—higher than Anglo-Saxons—and have a higher percentage of their population in the professions. That suggests to me that the argument that has been made that the great problem is simply one of color does not stand up to the facts. Color has obviously been a factor, but much less than *I* would have thought before collecting these data.

REASON: So this was not your *a priori* judgment?

SOWELL: No, I was quite surprised. And in fact I sent the data back to the computer people and asked that they do this over again. No matter how they did it, it always came out the same way. Moreover, since then there has been a more comprehensive study by Barry Chiswick at the University of Illinois, showing that with many groups the immigrants at some point rise and pass the income of the same group that was already resident there. That is, incoming Mexicans, for example, will, after some span of years, make higher incomes than Mexican Americans born in the United States. His conclusion is that people who move are different, not only in tangible terms like education and skills, but in terms of attitudes, their approach to life, and whatnot. And so even if you control all those other things you still find West Indians making more than blacks in New York City. If you look only at people who finish four years of college, only who have had two years of postgraduate work, only who were in the same occupation—you still find the difference.

REASON: Just by virtue of the fact that they have the characteristics that would lead them to move in the first place?

SOWELL: That's right. Moreover, I was quite surprised when I did this study—one of the other things that caused me to send the stuff back to the computer was that I did a study of blacks who migrated to New York City, as against those born there, and I found the same pattern that is more generally found throughout the world. The blacks who moved to New York City made more than the blacks who were born there. Not by much, but it is very surprising to think that would be so. And again, the explanation would be that the person who migrates is simply a different person from the person who is a native.

REASON: Isn't that evidence on the other side, though, that there may indeed be racial discrimination that's keeping these people down?

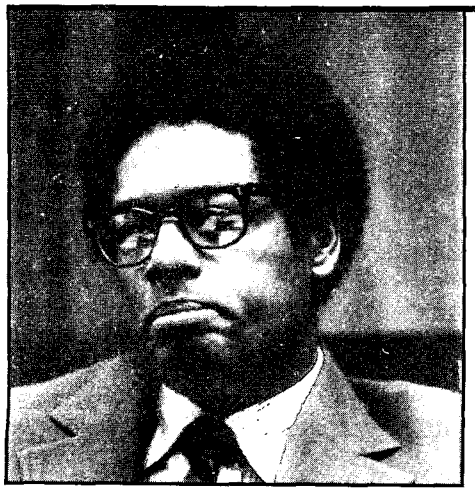
SOWELL: But you can't look at a person and tell if he has migrated.

REASON: No, but the fact that it takes this extra energy to make it if you're black.

SOWELL: No. You see the argument has been that race is virtually a complete explanation of the low incomes of blacks. And in order to test that I think you need to look at another black group that is really physically indistinguishable. (I have heard native blacks and West Indians claim to be able to tell the two apart, but when I tested this they would get them wrong every time.)

REASON: In *Race and Economics* you provide a fascinating explanation of the economic history of various ethnic groups. Maybe you could describe the ethnic history of the Japanese-Americans and what that has led you to conclude.

SOWELL: Well, the Japanese-Americans came over here



When you think of all the laws that were thrown in the past at the Chinese, the Japanese, and the Jews, it gives you a very heartening sense of the futility of laws.

around the turn of the century and faced an enormous set of laws and social practices which (1) prevented them from becoming citizens and (2) kept them out of many occupations, because laws said that you had to be a citizen in order to work in those occupations or to own land in California and all sorts of things like that. And then finally came the catastrophic blow when they were simply all rounded up en masse and put into camps during World War II. And they came out of that in better shape than when they went into it. It's only since that incarceration that they have shot up in income, so that they are in fact, among major ethnic groups in the United States, second only to the Jews in income. The average income of the Japanese-American is 32 percent higher than the national average.

REASON: What is the moral of the story? How do ethnic groups advance into the mainstream?

SOWELL: I guess those groups that have certain skills that are needed or certain adaptability rise. It seems to matter very little whether they came here destitute or they came here, and I'm thinking of the Germans, with a certain amount of money. Jews arrived with an average of $7 apiece on their person. They could just about make it from the dock down to the lower east side, about a two- or three-block walk, actually. And that's it. That's where they settled. And most of them didn't move out of New York City for decades. But they had certain skills and more so than skills, really, certain attitudes toward life.

Far more progress took place under the equal opportunity phase of the civil rights movement than has taken place under the affirmative action phase.

The Chinese are even a better example of that. The Chinese worked at occupations here in the United States totally different from what they had worked at in China. They were not all laundry men and restaurant owners in China, or restaurant workers. The Chinese in most other countries are tradesmen, bankers, what have you. In the United States they were kept out of all those occupations. And they still advanced. So it really isn't the particular occupation they went into. They became railroad workers, and when they succeeded at that, they were thrown out. They became miners; they were thrown out of that. And so on.

When you think of all the laws that were thrown in the past at the Chinese, the Japanese, and the Jews, it gives you a very heartening sense of the futility of laws. If laws were really effective, neither the Chinese nor the Jews would be prosperous in most countries of the world. Most of those laws aren't effective. Conversely, most laws designed to *improve* the positions of ethnic groups have not been effective either.

REASON: The laws that were aimed specifically at the Jews, for instance, ended up in putting them into occupations where they later came to use those skills much to their economic advantage.

SOWELL: Yes. People did not want the Jews to be landholders or to go into other occupations that were central to feudalism—to be in the guilds, for example. And so the Jews were forced into those occupations which later turned out to be central occupations in the rise of capitalism.

REASON: Many of them became economists.

SOWELL: Yes, yes.

REASON: You claim that women are *not* systematically discriminated against in the job market. That is an iconoclastic view and will probably not win you the Ms. Congeniality award at the next NOW convention. Why do you make this claim?

SOWELL: Because I've looked at the data. The data show me, at least, that most of the great differences we see in income between men and women are really differences between married women and all other persons. That is, married women do much less well in most occupations than do single women. Single women do pretty much the same as single men. And that's been true for a very long time—long before anyone ever heard of affirmative action. If you take, for example, women who recieved their Ph.D.s in the 1930s, by the 1950s they had become full professors to a slightly greater extent than males who received their Ph.D.s at the same time—*provided* you compare single women only. If you throw in married women, it drags the whole average way down, because the married women aren't doing nearly as well. Clearly, if someone drops out of the labor force to raise children and comes back in their 30s or 40s, they aren't going to do as well in terms of income. But, and this is where some of the noneconomic literature is particularly useful, surveys show that women do a disproportionate amount of the domestic work in the family. So what they are essentially doing is supporting the man's career. So the income gap is a completely artificial problem created by intellectuals. You have two people cooperating to earn a given income, but because one person's name appears on the check, we then ascribe all the income to him. In reality, it is also true that women spend more than half of the average husband's check. And so, clearly, two people are earning the check, two people are spending the check. But because of the statistical artifact that the money appears under one name, intellectuals take those kinds of purely verbal things so utterly literally and become so terribly excited about it, particularly when it ties in with their general vision of society, of the "evil oppressors" and so forth. Anything that ties in with the "evil oppressors" as a source of trouble—they love it.

REASON: The idea that government is pursuing now with affirmative action and busing and other such programs is that past injustices *have* occurred and the government has responsibility to certain groups of people to correct those injustices. The question is, does the government have the ability to make things more equal?

SOWELL: Well, are we talking about correcting the injustices or about doing something else?

REASON: The idea that affirmative action or busing programs, for example, can adjust for past injustices.

SOWELL: I think that's one of the great tragic mistakes of our time. History is absolutely irrevocable, no matter who is in office. The people who most need compensation for sins committed against them are long since dead, and nothing that we can do one way or another is

going to change a thing. And if you could do something that would make things better now, you ought to do it even if history had been just one beautiful fairy tale. By the same token, if what you're doing is not making things better, then you ought not to do it, no matter how terrible history has been. Look at busing, for example. Surely there's one group which can never be blamed for any of the wrongs of history: young black children in the school system. Now if you're going to do things that the black children and their parents don't want—that's what the polls indicate about busing—then it's not at all clear to me on what basis you can justify making blacks worse off in the name of correcting history. There is also a notion that runs through some of these decisions that really comes very close to direct racism. Judge Egly's busing order here in Los Angeles, for example, speaks of the white children as a scarce resource, for them to be spread around. In an earlier era, Kipling spoke of the white man's burden. Now Judge Egly is making it the white *child's* burden—to go forth and civilize the heathen.

Almost every premise with busing is wrong from step one. That is, one, that it makes a big difference whether kids are segregated or integrated racially in terms of psychology or in terms of education. The evidence that I've seen points overwhelmingly the other way, namely, it doesn't seem to make a hell of a lot of difference one way or the other. Take groups that were never segregated from each other. You see schools in the east where Jews and Italians were at the same school for 20 years, and for each of those 20 years the Jewish children had a substantial advantage over the Italian children, comparable to the advantages of whites over blacks in the south, in segregated schools. You can find black schools that were all segregated where some of them were so much ahead of the others and ahead of the national average that the difference exceeded that between blacks and whites in Mississippi. And so there are many, many variables at work, and whether or not the kids are sitting in the same room really has very little to do with it. One of the problems of the whole busing thing, too, is in the very use of the word *segregation*. Every other institution of society today is considered desegregated when there are no longer any racial barriers, regardless of how many people of whatever race choose to come in. A hotel or a hospital is desegregated when it is open to all. Only in the case of schools do we have an entirely different definition of segregation. The school is not desegregated until certain numbers appear, regardless of whether it is open to all. And it's one of the reasons why desegregation has been accomplished in every other institution *except* in the schools.

REASON: Now beyond this practical consequence with programs like busing there is this other idea, more or less a theoretical point—whether or not the government can in fact make things more equal. With affirmative action or busing programs, don't they have to be careful that they're not going to make things less equal in the long run?

SOWELL: Yes. One of the things I found in my study of the academic world under affirmative action is that you create a demand for those blacks who are sufficiently well qualified and there is no danger of your having to fire them. That is the guy who has his Ph.D. from Harvard, who has written the 12 books and the 60 articles. There is a great demand for him, but of course that's the rare black. The more common black is the black who is just coming out of graduate school, because that's a recent thing. And the question is, what are your chances of reappointing him? If you can't reappoint him, then you don't hire him in the first place. And so a direct result of affirmative action is that universities take on an enormous risk—so does any other large organization—when they hire either minorities or women, because subsequent pay and promotion patterns of those people may or may not correspond to that of the rest of the work force, and if not, each member of these groups can take them into court. So employers have an incentive to avoid hiring such people as well as an incentive to appease the government. A great part of their effort goes into showing so-called good faith, which can be done in all sorts of ways which do not involve actually hiring anybody.

REASON: So it seems that political action as a strategy for economic advancement is not profitable.

SOWELL: Oh, yes. In fact, you could almost make a very strong case for the opposite conclusion, that if you made a list of those groups that have risen from poverty to affluence and particularly those who've done it most rapidly or against the greatest opposition, they are groups that have either avoided politics or are not terribly successful at politics. The Chinese, the Japanese, the Jews, are classic examples. The Irish, on the other hand, are clearly the most successful of all American ethnic groups in the realm of politics, and they were the slowest rising of all the European immigrant groups. Even after they had achieved political control, the bulk of the Irish were still unskilled laborers, domestic servants, and so on. The group that has been most involved with politics has been, of course, the American Indian. And they are among the very few groups that have lower incomes than blacks, higher unemployment rates, and a generally lower standard of living. Another group that has lower income than blacks, with regional differences left out, is Puerto Ricans, and they are the only group that's arrived in this country almost entirely since the creation of the welfare state. And the enormous difficulties they're having I think are in no small part due to the welfare state.

Most of the great differences we see in income between men and women are really differences between married women and all other persons.

REASON: How would they be different from, say, Cubans? Cubans, I would assume, have a much higher standard of living, but they've arrived during the same period.

SOWELL: That's true. The Cubans have one amazing advantage in that many if not most of them were of middle- or upper-class status and had tremendous amounts of skills when they came here, so they could move into Miami and begin taking up their own businesses. Perhaps they didn't even know about the welfare

system, because many of them took all sorts of menial jobs in Miami that blacks would not take. And so they would begin as cooks and bottle washers and shoeshine boys and so forth. And in a few years they were owning the place.

REASON: So ignorance is bliss.

SOWELL: Ignorance is bliss, certainly.

REASON: What a lead-in to your new book, *Knowledge and Decisions*! You acknowledge a debt there to F.A. Hayek's essay "The Uses of Knowledge in Society." What are you trying to achieve with your new book?

SOWELL: I guess to have (1) some feeling of the relative advantages of different kinds of institutions for making different kinds of decisions in society and (2) to look at the trends over time in the location of decisions—that is, from what kinds of institutions and processes are the decisions moving toward what kinds of decisions and processes. What I find is that over time decisions are moving away from those people who have the most knowledge and toward those people who have less knowledge but who simply have the power to impose their will.

REASON: In your discussion of central planning you refer to the problem of obtaining knowledge on the part of the central planners. Were you influenced by the words of Ludwig von Mises in his attacks on socialism?

SOWELL: Not really, because I read those many years ago and I don't recall most of them. The article that I cite from Hayek in the *American Economic Review* in 1945 really sort of gave me a set of questions to ask, in a sense. It was not just the elucidation of a principle that was important. It was the fact that, with this thought in the back of my mind, I saw many, many things that fit into this pattern. I was just amazed at all the very different kinds of situations in which you have this basic problem: How do you get the knowledge from the person who *knows* to the person that *makes* the decision? And particularly, how do you get it to him in a form that gets him to make the right decision? That is, you may get the knowledge to him, but he may have various reasons not to want to pay attention to it. So the question becomes, How do you force him to take that into account?

I was amazed at all the very different situations in which you have this basic problem: How do you get the knowledge from the person who *knows* to the person making the *decisions?*

REASON: What has been the reaction to your new book? I saw a review in the *New York Times Book Review* by Marc Plattner. First of all, he doesn't seem to understand what you're talking about. He understands that you're an advocate of the free market—he can attack that; he knows that's wrong. But is it frustrating to have this reviewed in the liberal press and have people miss the mark on it?

SOWELL: Well, I must say in all fairness it is not simply in the liberal press but in all presses. *Fortune* magazine also seems to think this is a book about the free market, and I do discuss it in the book but not nearly as much as I discuss other things. It's really a book about decision-making in general. There are certain words which are like red flags to the bull, so when they see that I'm saying that there are in fact some things that the market does well, that is one of the things they seize upon. Marc Plattner, I think, made an honest effort to call it as he saw it. I just wish he'd seen it more as I wrote it!

REASON: He does pay you the tribute right off the bat of saying, "Thomas Sowell is probably America's most distinguished black social scientist." Isn't that a bit of a burden to carry?

SOWELL: Yes. The only redeeming feature is thinking of how many other black social scientists will be angered by seeing that in print. [Laughs] But the remark really had nothing to do with the book, because it's not a book about race or ethnicity or any of those things.

REASON: Outside of the *New York Times,* what has the response been?

SOWELL: Uniformly good, except for one denunciation by Lester Thurow in the *New Republic,* which I think might also be as uniformly good.

REASON: Is there much interest outside of economics in your work?

SOWELL: I'm not sure. I've had some things reprinted in readings for sociologists, for psychologists. I have done some work on IQ and ethnicity; in fact, I have probably collected more ethnic IQs than anybody—about 70,000 going back over a period of 50 years.

REASON: Let's talk about that—what about Professor Jensen and racial differences in IQ?

SOWELL: That's a very large subject. I end up quarreling with both Jensen and his critics. Jensen starts with the premise that there is a unique black IQ which has a unique genetic explanation. The critics start from the premise that there is a unique black IQ which has a unique environmental explanation. Neither of them has raised the more basic question: Is there in fact a unique black IQ? And that was why I did the historical study. The answer I found was that no, there is not. One of the great tragedies of the social sciences is that we are forever answering questions without knowing what the questions mean. For example, if you go back around 1910, 1920, you will find a great number of groups who had IQs the same as or lower than the IQs of blacks. What you find is that as most of those groups rose socially and economically, their IQs rose. So that you had, for example, Polish IQs that were the same level as blacks around World War I; now Polish IQs are above the national average. Jews, very surprisingly, scored quite low in mental tasks during World War I, and in fact the man who invented the college boards—SAT—said that we have now disproved the popular notion that Jews are intelligent. His proof was somewhat premature, we found out, and Jews have won about a quarter of all the Nobel Prizes won by Americans.

REASON: If blacks and other ethnic groups have sort of leap-frogged in this game of IQ, doesn't that destroy Jensen's conclusion?

SOWELL: Blacks have not risen relative to the national average, because blacks have not risen that much economically during this period of time.

REASON: But if these so-called racial IQs are in flux over time depending upon economic success, it's pretty hard to explain it in terms of evolutionary trends.

SOWELL: I think so. I am enormously disappointed that Jensen has not, so far as I know, publicly replied to this. There is an even more devastating study that Jensen again, to the best of my knowledge, never replied to, which was almost a laboratory study of black orphans raised by white families, and their average IQ was 106. So I think the evidence against Jensen is quite strong. What he has succeeded in doing, though, is to turn what is regarded as an axiomatic proposition about IQ into an open question and especially to demolish a lot of the more naive kind of environmental theory—the notion that you can take such things as physical surroundings and that will tell you a great deal, when in fact it doesn't tell you a great deal.

REASON: You have done work in the history of theoretical economics and on Marxism in particular. What is the present condition of Marxist economic theory? Is it still breathing?

SOWELL: Intellectually, no; but politically, it is going very strong. This is not uncommon. Certainly, it has bankrupted itself morally. I think the building of the Berlin Wall can be considered a sufficient declaration of bankruptcy by Marxism. And yet it has a great appeal to successive generations of young people, many of whom may take years, or even decades, to work their way out of it. With the increasing number of avowed Marxists in the academic world, there are going to be more and more younger people who take that route.

REASON: Marx claimed himself to be an economist, and despite the internal inconsistency of Marx's arguments, which has been conceded by the people who still call themselves Marxian today, those people continue to thrive in today's academic world wearing the hat of Marx and still wearing the hat of a professional economist. Isn't this an anomaly?

SOWELL: No, I don't think so. And the emotional and moral appeal of Marxism is so strong that I don't think it's very likely that many of its empirical consequences are going to make very much difference to most people. Insofar as the Soviet Union, for example, does not work out the way they want it to, then it will just be blamed on the particular people who happen to be in charge. And if it doesn't work out in a number of other places, then it will be blamed on those local circumstances. It will never be blamed on the fact that there's something inherently undoable about what they are trying to do.

REASON: So it thrives on emotion rather than reason?

SOWELL: Yes, but more than emotion. I would say it thrives on a certain vision, a vision in which the poor are poor *because* the rich are rich. They're poor because what they have—or should have—has been taken away from them. And that has a great moral appeal. I think also that the Marxist vision is really a very strong echo of the whole religious vision of society. The last shall be first. The mighty shall be laid low. And so on. It taps many of the things that are there either in the human breast or else that are planted quite early in religious teachings. It's apocalyptic and so on.

REASON: Don't you think that liberty can be a compelling alternative vision to Marxism?

SOWELL: Like most things, liberty is valuable in inverse proportion to what you already have, so people who have been raised free value it very cheaply. Now, once they have lost it, they may then value it very highly. But in many cases it's much too late then.

Let me say, incidentally, that I see Marxism as one of those chance mutations that occurs in the body politic. Then it is preserved because it happens to work—it's an enormously efficient system for the achievement and consolidation of power. One of the reasons is that the moral vision neutralizes opponents, neutralizes critics, and neutralizes doubts among the followers. There are very few doctrines which can do that so effectively. So people who are basically humane and decent will stand mute as Stalin murders millions of human beings, who would not stand mute for a policeman roughing up a suspect on the street corner. Because the policeman does not have any ideology to protect him and interpret his roughing up the person on the corner as part of the glorious history of mankind.

REASON: Was Marx a brilliant man?

SOWELL: He *was*. And I think he believed in a vision that is quite different from the result that has actually taken place. But like so many things, once he created this vision, it acquired a life of its own. It's there now for anybody who wants to use it as a power-getting and power-consolidating mechanism. Not only can you control people within your own country, but you have people among your followers who will stand for far more violence and terrorism than they would ever stand for otherwise. And you have people in democratic countries who will apologize for you because *they* are caught by this vision and think that the ultimate result is going to be something wonderful.

The Marxist vision is a very strong echo of the whole religious vision of society—the last shall be first, the mighty shall be laid low, and so on.

REASON: So how do you feel about the short-term and the long-term prospects for liberty?

SOWELL: Oh, I'm pessimistic. Because I don't see any easy way that one reverses—I don't see *any* way that one reverses—totalitarianism from within. I don't know of any example where it has ever happened. And if democratic nations can always become totalitarian, but totalitarian nations will not become democratic, then in the long run, ultimately, the whole world will be totalitarian. But I think there are a number of things that can be done. That's one of the reasons why I would be for a more active foreign policy, let's say than some libertarians—to stop it before it reaches that point. And I think you stop it by cooperating with such governments as actually exist in the world, that can and will oppose it, just as we will stop crime with such policemen as happen to be on the force. It would be wonderful to have better policemen, but we are either going to stop it with the policemen that are on the force, or we are going to let it take over. ◻

H. L. MENCKEN: THE JOYOUS LIBERTARIAN

In commemoration of the 100th anniversary of Mencken's birth, *Reason* reprints a classic essay.

BY MURRAY N. ROTHBARD

The extortions and oppressions of government will go on so long as such bare fraudulence deceives and disarms the victims—so long as they are ready to swallow the immemorial official theory that protesting against the stealings of the archbishop's secretary's nephew's mistress's illegitimate son is a sin against the Holy Ghost.

—H. L. Mencken

IT IS TYPICAL of American *Kultur* that it was incapable of understanding H. L. Mencken. And it was typical of H. L. Mencken that this didn't bother him a bit; in fact, quite the contrary, for it confirmed his estimate of his fellow countrymen.

It is difficult for Americans to understand a *merger* of high-spirited wit and devotion to principle; one is either a humorist, gently or acidly spoofing the foibles of one's age, or else one is a serious and solemn thinker. That a man of ebullient wit can be, in a sense, all the more devoted to positive ideas and principles is understood by very few; almost always, he is set down as a pure cynic and nihilist. This was and still is the common fate of H. L. Mencken; but it is no more than he would have cheerfully expected.

Any man who is an individualist and a libertarian in this day and age has a difficult row to hoe. He finds himself in a world marked, if not dominated, by folly, fraud, and tyranny. He has, if he is a reflecting man, three possible courses of action open to him: (1) he may retire from the social and political world into his private occupation: in the case of Mencken's early partner, George Jean Nathan, he can retire into a world of purely aesthetic comtemplation; (2) he can set about to try to change the world for the better or at least to formulate and propagate his views with such an ultimate hope in mind; or (3) he can stay in the world, enjoying himself immensely at this spectacle of folly.

To take this third route requires a special type of personality with a special type of judgment about the world. He must, on the one hand, be an individualist with a serene and unquenchable sense of self-confidence; he must be supremely "inner-directed" with no inner shame or quaking at going against the judgment of the herd. He must, secondly, have a supreme zest for enjoying life and the spectacle it affords; he must be an individualist who cares deeply about liberty and individual excellence but who can—from that same dedication to truth and liberty—enjoy and lampoon a society that has turned its back on the best that it can achieve. And he must, thirdly, be deeply pessimistic about any possibility of changing and reforming the ideas and actions of the vast majority of his fellow men. He must believe that *boobus Americanus* is doomed to be *boobus Americanus* forevermore. Put these qualities together, and we are a long way toward explaining the route taken by Henry Louis Mencken.

Of course, Mencken had other qualities, too: enormous gusto, a sparkling wit, a keen and erudite appreciation of many fields of knowledge, a zest for the dramatic

events of the everyday world that made him a born journalist. Despite his omnivorous passion for intellectual fields and disciplines, he had no temperament for fashioning rigorous systems of thought—but then, how many people have? All these qualities reinforced his bent for what he became.

A serene and confident individualist, dedicated to competence and excellence and deeply devoted to liberty, but convinced that the bulk of his fellows were beyond repair, Mencken carved out a role unique in American history: he sailed joyously into the fray, slashing and cutting happily into the buncombe and folly he saw all around him, puncturing the balloons of pomposity, gaily cleansing the Augean stables of cant, hypocrisy, absurdity, and cliché, "heaving," as he once put it, "the dead cat into the temple" to show bemused worshippers of the inane that he would not be struck dead on the spot. And in the course of this task, rarely undertaken in any age, a task performed purely for his own enjoyment, he exercised an enormous liberating force upon the best minds of a whole generation.

The tragedy—for us, not for Mencken himself—is that the bulk of his supposed followers made the same mistake as everyone else in presuming wit and serious purpose cannot be joined. Blinded by the wit, they did not realize the positive values that should have been evident in his work. And so those who happily joined Mencken in scoffing at Babbittry, at Prohibition and the Anti-Saloon League, at the wowsers and the Uplift of the 1920s, abandoned Mencken to enlist in the ranks of the intensified Uplift and the more extravagant wowsers of the 1930s.

The very scorners of the politicians and political nostrums of the '20s promptly and fiercely subscribed to the far more pernicious nostrums of the political quacks of the New Deal. The same Menckenians who clear-sightedly saw the folly of America's immersion into World War I beat the drums loudly and with no trace of humor or hesitation for the equal or greater folly of our entry into World War II. The failure of Mencken's would-be followers to understand his "message" (a concept he would have abhorred) certainly did not depress Mencken; it only confirmed him in his judgment of the pervasiveness of the "booboisie." But it was a calamity for the country.

UNIFYING INDIVIDUALISM

If Mencken was not a nihilist, what positive values did he hold? His values included a devoted dedication to his craft—to his work as editor, journalist, linguist. This in turn reflected his thoroughgoing and pervasive individualism, with its corollary devotion to individual excellence and to individual liberty. They included a life-long passion for music. They included a perhaps excessive zeal for science, the scientific method, and medical orthodoxy; along with the zeal for science came a mechanistic type of determinism that undoubtedly helped to shape his pessimistic view of the possibility of changing the ideas and actions of men.

Mencken's pervasive individualist *Weltanschauung* gave an unappreciated consistency to his views on many different subjects. It gave a system to his superficially piecemeal forays into innumerable fields. Let us take, for example, such a supposedly "nonpolitical" field as folk music.

It is not accidental that both the socialist left and the nationalist right—those twin enemies of individualism—in our century have made a virtual fetish of the "people's" folk song. Mencken cut to the heart of the matter in his inimitable review of Dr. Louise Pound's *Poetic Origins and the Ballad:*

> *Dr. Pound's book completely disposes of the theory upon which nine-tenths of all the pedagogical discussions of the ballad and its origins are based. This is the theory that the ballads familiar to all of us... are the product, not of individual authors, but of whole herds of minnesingers working together... in brief, that the primitive balladists first joined in a communal hoofing, then began to moan and hum a tune, and finally fitted words to it. It is difficult to imagine anything more idiotic, and yet this doctrine is cherished as something almost sacred by whole droves of professors and rammed annually into the skulls of innumerable candidates for the Ph.D. Dr. Pound proves... that the ballads really did not originate that way at all—that they were written, on the contrary, by individual poets with talents... and that most of them first saw the light, not at vulgar shindigs on the village green, but at fashionable and even intellectual ale-parties in castle halls.*
>
> *The notion that* any *respectable work of art can have a communal origin is wholly nonsensical. The plain people, taking them together, are quite as incapable of a coherent aesthetic impulse as they are of courage, honesty, or honor. The cathedrals of the Middle Ages were not planned and built by whole communities, but by individual men; and all the communities had to do with the business was to do the hard work, reluctantly and often badly. So with folk-song, folk-myth, folk-balladry.*

The myth of Mencken as a mocking nihilist has pervaded literary criticism; it was with surprise and much admiration, then, that the eminent critic Samuel Putnam read Mencken's great collection of short pieces—selected and edited by himself—the *Mencken Chrestomathy.* In a perceptive review, Putnam wrote that it was now evident that Mencken was a "Tory anarchist." "Tory anarchist" is indeed an excellent summation of Mencken's lifelong world view.

Mencken's guiding passion was individual liberty. To his good friend Hamilton Owens, he once solemnly declared: "I believe in only one thing and that thing is human liberty. If ever a man is to achieve anything like dignity, it can happen only if superior men are given absolute freedom to think what they want to think and say what they want to say. I am against any man and any organization which seeks to limit or deny that freedom... [and] the superior man can be sure of freedom only if it is given to all men." At another time he wrote that he believed in absolute individual liberty "up to the limit of the unbearable, and even beyond."

And in a letter to one of his biographers, Ernest Boyd, Mencken wrote: "So far as I can make out, I believe in only one thing: liberty. But I do not believe in even liberty enough to want to force it upon anyone. That is, I am nothing of the reformer, however much I may rant against this or that great curse or malaise. In that ranting there is usually far more delight than indignation."

GOVERNMENT EXPOSED

The *Chrestomathy* contains some brilliant writing on what Mencken captioned as the "inner nature" of government:

> *All government, in its essence, is a conspiracy against the superior man; its one permanent object is to oppress him and cripple him. If it be aristocratic in organization, then it seeks to protect the man who is superior only in law against the man who is superior in fact; if it be democratic, then it seeks to protect the man who is inferior in every way against both. One of its primary functions is to regiment men by force, to make them as much alike as possible and as dependent upon one another as possible, to search out and combat originality among them. All it can see in an original idea is potential change, and hence an invasion of its prerogatives. The most dangerous man, to any government, is the man who is able to think things out for himself, without regard to the prevailing superstitions and taboos. Almost inevitably he comes to the conclusion that the government he lives under is dishonest, insane and intolerable, and so, if he is romantic, he tries to change it. And even if he is not romantic personally he is very apt to spread discontent among those who are....*
>
> *The average man, whatever his errors otherwise, at least sees clearly that government is something lying outside him and outside the generality of his fellow men—that it is a separate, independent and often hostile power, only partly under his control, and capable of doing him great harm. In his romantic moments, he may think of it as a benevolent father or even as a sort of* jinn *or god, but he never thinks of it as part of himself. In time of trouble he looks to it to perform miracles for his benefit; at other times he sees it as an enemy with which he must do constant battle. Is it a fact of no significance that robbing the government is everywhere regarded as a crime of less magnitude than robbing an individual?...*
>
> *... When a private citizen is robbed a worthy man is deprived of the fruits of his industry and thrift; when the government is robbed the worst that happens is that certain rogues and loafers have less money to play with than they had before. The notion that they have earned that money is never entertained; to most sensible men it would seem ludicrous. They are simply rascals who, by accidents of law, have a somewhat dubious right to a share in the earnings of their fellow men. When that share is diminished by private enterprise the business is, on the whole, far more laudable than not.*
>
> *This gang is well-nigh immune to punishment. Its worst extortions, even when they are baldly for private profit, carry no certain penalties under our laws. Since the first days of the Republic, less than a dozen of its members have been impeached, and only a few obscure understrappers have ever been put into prison. The number of men sitting at Atlanta and Leavenworth for revolting against the extortions of government is always ten times as great as the number of government officials condemned for oppressing the taxpayers to their own gain.... There are no longer any citizens in the world; there are only subjects. They work day in and day out for their masters; they are bound to die for their masters at call.*

Mencken had little faith in the ability of revolutions to effect an overthrow on behalf of liberty: "Political revolutions do not often accomplish anything of genuine value; their one undoubted effect is simply to throw out one gang of thieves and put in another. After a revolution, of course, the successful revolutionists always try to convince doubters that they have achieved great things, and usually they hang any man who denies it. But that surely doesn't prove their case."

This blend of libertarian doctrine and pessimism on achieving it was summed up by Mencken: "The ideal government of all reflective men...is one which lets the individual alone—one which barely escapes being no government at all. This ideal, I believe, will be realized in the world twenty or thirty centuries after I have passed from these scenes and taken up my public duties in Hell."

Mencken saw clearly the fallacy of treating government officials as uniquely motivated by the public weal:

> *These men, in point of fact, are seldom if ever moved by anything rationally describable as public spirit; there is actually no more public spirit among them than among so many burglars or streetwalkers. Their purpose, first, last and all the time, is to promote their private advantage, and to that end, and that end alone, they exercise all the vast powers that are in their hands.... Whatever it is they seek, whether security, greater ease, more money or more power, it has to come out of the common stock, and so it diminishes the shares of all other men.*

One of the major forces keeping governmental tyranny unchecked, Mencken pointed out, is the credulity of the masses of men: "The State is not force alone. It depends upon the credulity of man quite as much as upon his docility. Its aim is not merely to make him obey, but also to make him want to obey."

Is government sometimes useful? Answered Mencken: "So is a doctor. But suppose the dear fellow claimed the right, every time he was called in to prescribe for a bellyache or a ringing in the ears, to raid the family silver, use the family toothbrushes, and execute the *droit de seigneur* upon the housemaid?"

THE CITIZEN'S REVENGE

Mencken was excelled by no one in what he called "Utopian flights"—hilarious and magnificent projects for libertarian reform of government or of society in general. Thus, in a piece written in 1924, before, as he put it, "the New Deal afflicted the country with a great mass of new administrative law and extra-tyrannical jobholders," Mencken proposed a searching reform in our system of administrative law.

He begins by saying that "in the immoral monarchies of the continent of Europe, now happily abolished by God's will, there was, in the old days of sin, an intelligent and effective way of dealing with delinquent officials." Not only, he adds, were they subject to ordinary criminal law, but *also* to special courts for "offenses...peculiar to their offices."

Prussia maintained a court where any citizen was free to lodge a complaint against an official, and a guilty official could be punished in many ways—forced to pay damages against a victimized citizen, removed from office, or sent to jail. "Had a Prussian judge in those far-off days of despotism, overcome by a brainstorm of *kaiserliche* passion, done any of the high-handed and irrational things that our own judges, Federal and State, do almost every day, an aggrieved citizen might have hailed him before the administrative court and recovered heavy damages from him... these statutes were enforced with

Prussian barbarity; and the jails were constantly full of errant officials."

Mencken adds that he does not precisely propose, "of course," the Prussian system for the United States:

> *As a matter of fact, the Prussian scheme would probably prove ineffective in the Republic, if only because it involved setting up one gang of jobholders to judge and punish another gang. It worked very well in Prussia before the country was civilized by force of arms because, as everyone knows, a Prussian official was trained in ferocity from infancy, and regarded every man arraigned before him, whether a fellow official or not, as guilty* ipso facto; *in fact, any thought of a prisoner's possible innocence was abhorrent to him as a reflection upon the* Polizei, *and by inference, upon the Throne, the whole monarchical idea, and God. But in America... judge and prisoner would often be fellow Democrats or fellow Republicans, and hence jointly interested in protecting their party against scandal and its members against the loss of their jobs.*

"What is needed," concluded Mencken, "is a system (a) that does not depend for its execution upon the good will of fellow jobholders, and (b) that provides swift, certain and unpedantic punishments, each fitted neatly to its crime." Mencken's proposed remedy

> *provides that any [citizen]... having looked into the acts of a jobholder and found him delinquent, may punish him instantly and on the spot, and in any manner that seems appropriate and convenient—and that, in case this punishment involves physical damage to the jobholder, the ensuing inquiry by the grand jury or coroner shall confine itself strictly to the question whether the jobholder deserved what he got. In other words, I propose that it shall no longer be* malum in se *for a citizen to pummel, cowhide, kick, gouge, cut, wound, bruise, maim, burn, club, bastinado, flay or even lynch a jobholder, and that it shall be* malum prohibitum *only to the extent that the punishment exceeds the jobholder's desserts. The amount of this excess, if any, may be determined very conveniently by a petit jury, as other questions of guilt are now determined....*
>
> *The advantages of this plan, I believe, are too patent to need argument. At one stroke it removes all the legal impediments which now make the punishment of a recreant jobholder so hopeless a process.... Say a citizen today becomes convinced that a certain judge is a jackass—that his legal learning is defective, his sense of justice atrophied and his conduct of cases before him tyrannical and against decency. As things stand, it is impossible to do anything about it.... Nor is anything to be gained by denouncing him publicly and urging all good citizens to vote against him when he comes up for re-election, for his term may run for ten or fifteen years, and even if it expires tomorrow and he is defeated the chances are good that his successor will be quite as bad, and maybe even worse.*
>
> *But now imagine any citizen free to approach him in open court and pull his nose. Or even, in aggravated cases, to cut off his ears, throw him out of the window, or knock him in the head with an ax. How vastly more attentive he would be to his duties! How diligently he would apply himself to the study of the law! How careful he would be about the rights of litigants before him!*

UPI

H.L. Mencken, editor of the *American Mercury,* **holds up a copy (1926).**

BABBITTRY VS. CAPITALISM

Mencken had no particular interest in economic matters, but he saw clearly that capitalism, the consequent of individual liberty in the economic sphere, is the most productive and rational economic system. He bitterly opposed the New Deal for being anticapitalist as well as antilibertarian.

> *We owe to it almost everything that passes under the general name of civilization today. The extraordinary progress of the world since the Middle Ages has not been due to the mere expenditure of human energy, nor even to the flights of human genius, for men have worked hard since the remotest times, and some of them had been of surpassing intellect. No, it has been due to the accumulation of capital. That accumulation... provided the machinery that gradually diminished human drudgery, and liberated the spirit of the worker, who had formerly been almost indistinguishable from a mule.*

His old friend, Hamilton Owens, writes of Mencken's anger at Roosevelt's taking America off the gold standard. "With all the vehemence of which he was capable he insisted it was downright robbery. He talked about taking court action in person."

In correspondence with the famous

socialist Upton Sinclair, who had evidently plied him with the old well-tested bromide on the supposed efficiency of government post offices, fire departments, public health services, etc., Mencken, instead of hastily retreating and compromising, as most conservatives do when faced with similar challenges, riposted:

> *Your questions are easy. The government brings my magazine to you only unwillingly. It tried to ruin my business* [The American Mercury], *and failed only by an inch. It charges too much for postal orders, and loses too many of them. A corporation of idiot Chinamen could do the thing better. Its machine for putting out fires is intolerably expensive and inefficient. It seldom, in fact, actually puts out a fire; they burn out.... The Army had nothing to do with the discovery of the cause of yellow fever. Its bureaucrats persecuted the men who did the work. They could have done it much more quickly if they had been outside the Army. It took years of effort to induce the government to fight mosquitoes, and it does the work very badly today.*

And, in a significant but forgotten review of the individualist Sir Ernest Benn's *The Confessions of a Capitalist,* Mencken wrote that Benn "devotes most of his book to proving what the majority of Americans regard as axiomatic: that the capitalistic system, whatever its defects, yet works better than any other system so far devised by man. The rest of his space he gives over to proofs that government is inevitably extravagant and wasteful—that nothing it does is ever done as cheaply and efficiently as the same thing might be done by private enterprise. I see nothing to object to here." And Mencken immediately adds: "Even the most precious functions of government—say, collecting taxes or hanging men—would be better done if the doing of them were farmed out to Ford."

The great individualist Albert Jay Nock has written that, while in the 1920s he was generally considered a flaming "radical" and in the 1930s a bitter "reactionary," his political philosophy remained, in these decades, exactly the same. The same might be said of his friend Mencken, who also remained, throughout, an individualist and a libertarian.

In the 1920s Mencken directed his fire against the tariff and other special privileges to favored business groups, against laws and edicts against free speech and other personal liberties, and especially against the monstrous tyranny of Prohibition. In the 1930s Mencken directed his major attacks against the major threat to liberty of that era: the New Deal. The former Menckenites of the 1920s and his new-found conservative champions of the 1930s, each, in believing that Mencken had now shifted from left to right, showed that they understood neither Mencken nor the principles of liberty.

Often, what was mistaken for anti-capitalism was simply a cultural and aesthetic distaste that Mencken had for the bulk of businessmen ("Babbitts") as persons—a distaste which they shared with the common run, the "mass-men," of other occupations. But Mencken's antipathy to the cultural tastes of individual capital*ists* must not be confused—as he never did—with opposition to capital*ism* as such.

Looking back on the two eras as early as 1934, Mencken wrote to a friend:

> *If I really believed that I had Left a Mark upon my Time I think I'd leap into the nearest ocean. This is no mere fancy talk. It is based on the fact that I believe the American people are more insane today than they were when I began to write. Certainly the Rotarians at their worst never concocted anything as preposterous as some of the inventions of the Brain Trust. They were harmless fools, seeking to formulate a substitute for the Christianity that was slipping from them. But the Brain Trusters, at least in large part, are maniacal fanatics, and will lead us down to ruin if they are not soon suppressed.*

One of the delightful aspects of Mencken, indeed, is the constancy of his views. As he once, at the age of 60, playfully wrote to a friend: "On all known subjects, ranging from aviation to xylophone playing, I have fixed and invariable ideas. They have not changed since I was four or five years old."

HOSTILITY TO SUPPRESSION

H. L. Mencken's contempt for democracy is well known. It stemmed largely from his primary devotion to individual liberty and his insight that the bulk of men—the democratic majority—is generally inclined to suppress rather than defend the liberty of the individual. Mencken once summed up his view of the nature of democracy, the common man, and the State in this eight-word definition of *democracy:* "Democracy is the worship of jackals by jackasses."

Other Menckenian definitions: "Democracy is the theory that the common people know what they want, and deserve to get it good and hard." "If x is the population of the United States and y is the degree of imbecility of the average American, then democracy is the theory that x times y is less than y." All of democracy's axioms "resolve themselves into thundering paradoxes, many amounting to downright contradictions in terms. The mob is competent to rule the rest of us—but it must be rigorously policed itself. There is a government, not of men, but laws—but men are set upon benches to decide finally what the law is and may be."

On democracy's inherent tendency to suppress liberty, Mencken wrote in a private letter:

> *All appeals to any intrinsic love of free speech are futile. There is no such passion in the people. It is only an aristocracy that is ever tolerant. The masses are invariably cocksure, suspicious, furious and tyrannical. This, in fact, is the central objection to democracy: that it hinders progress by penalizing innovation and nonconformity.*

Mencken's atheism is, again, well known, but for him passionate hostility was reserved for those religious groups that persisted in imposing their moral codes by coercion upon the rest of the population. In Mencken's day, the prime example was Prohibition, and therefore Mencken's hostility was directed toward the Methodists and Baptists. In contrast, Mencken had no particular animus against the Roman Catholics (especially the non-Irish sections): "Catholics are not Prohibitionists, they have more humor than the Methodists," he is supposed to have said once, and he was apparently friendly with quite a few members of the Catholic clergy.

The linkage in Mencken's thought between religious coercion of morals, democracy, the common man, and tyranny over the individual, may be seen in one of his most uproarious articles—his blistering attack upon the American farmer:

> *The same mountebanks who get to Washington by promising to augment his [the farmer's] gains and make good his losses devote whatever time is left over from that enterprise to saddling the rest of us with oppressive and idiotic laws, all hatched on the farm. There, where the cows low through the still night, and the jug of Peruna stands behind the stove, and bathing begins, as at Biarritz, with the vernal equinox—there is the reservoir of all the nonsensical legislation which makes the United States a buffoon among the great nations. It was among country Methodists, practitioners of a theology degraded almost to the level of voodooism, that Prohibition was invented, and it was by country Methodists... that it was fastened upon the rest of us, to the damage of our bank accounts, our dignity and our viscera. What lay under it, and under all the other crazy enactments of its category, was no more and no less than the yokel's congenital and incurable hatred of the city man—his simian rage against everyone who, as he sees it, is having a better time than he is.*

MILITARY FOLLY

Mencken's view of the hostility of the common man toward liberty was also expressed in his insight into the truly puzzling question: How did the overwhelming majority of conscripts manage to adjust so readily to the enslavement of army life?

> *All save a small minority of them came from environments a great deal less comfortable than an Army camp....At one stroke they were relieved of that haunting uncertainty about subsistence which is the curse of all poor and ignorant young men, and also of all need to experiment and decide for themselves. They were fed and clothed at the public expense...and could engage freely in sports and other divertissements forbidden in their native places. Their lives, in brief, were not unlike those of the inmates of a well-run prison, with...the constant expectation of release on some near tomorrow—not as wards of nosey cops and parole officers, but as heroes....*
>
> *...In every community in America, however small, there are local notables whose notability rests wholly on the fact that they were once drafted into some war or other.... Their general intelligence is shown by the kind of ideas they advocate. They are, in the main, bitter enemies of the liberty of the individual, and are responsible for some of the worst corruptions of politics. The most grasping of all politicians is the war veteran.*

Mencken, in fact, was an arch-"isolationist" who bitterly opposed American entry into both World Wars I and II. He often remarked that he was opposed to intervention in both wars, but that if America *had to* intervene, it should have intervened on the other side. In April 1942 he wrote jocularly to a friend: "The coming summer promises to provide Christian men with the best show seen on earth since the Crusades. I am looking forward to it with the most eager anticipations. I only hope that if the Japs actually take California they are polite to you." And to his old friend Harry Elmer Barnes, Mencken wrote in September 1943: "I am so constituted that I have to either Tell It All or stay silent altogether. In this war, as in the last, it seems to me to be most rational to save up what I have to say until it can be said freely."

Mencken was particularly concerned with the well-nigh absolute suppression of civil liberties that seems inevitably to stem from participation in war, and in the conduct of World War I he saw the exemplar of his jaundiced view of democracy, the State, foreign intervention, and the common man. One of Mencken's funniest "buffooneries" was his proposal to decorate lavishly the "home front" heroes of World War I:

> *What I propose is a variety of the Distinguished Service Medal for civilians...to mark off varying services to democracy....for the university president who prohibited the teaching of the enemy language in his learned grove, heaved the works of Goethe out of the university library, cashiered every professor unwilling to support Woodrow for the first vacancy in the Trinity, took to the stump for the National Security League, and made two hundred speeches in moving picture theaters—for this giant of loyal endeavor let no 100 percent American speak of anything less than the grand cross of the order, with a gold badge in stained glass, a baldric of the national colors, a violet plug hat with a sunburst on the side, the privilege of the floor of Congress, and a pension of $10,000 a year....*
>
> *Palmer and Burleson I leave for special legislation. If mere university presidents, such as Nicholas Murray Butler, are to have the grand cross, then Palmer deserves to be rolled in malleable gold from head to foot, and polished until he blinds the cosmos.*

There is no space here to discuss Mencken's other notable contributions—his dissections of Veblen, Wilson, and Theodore Roosevelt, his being the first person to write books on Nietzsche or George Bernard Shaw, his....But let it suffice to say that America desperately needs another Mencken and that the reader should consider the above a tantalizing sample of Menckeniana to spur him toward more of the rich and copious product available.

There is no better way of concluding than to turn to Mencken's noble and moving Credo, written for a "What I Believe" series in a leading magazine:

> *I believe that no discovery of fact, however trivial, can be wholly useless to the race, and that no trumpeting of falsehood, however virtuous in intent, can be anything but vicious.*
>
> *I believe that all government is evil, in that all government must necessarily make war upon liberty, and that the democratic form is as bad as any of the other forms....*
>
> *I believe in complete freedom of thought and speech—alike for the humblest man and the mightiest, and in the utmost freedom of conduct that is consistent with living in organized society.*
>
> *I believe in the capacity of man to conquer his world, and to find out what it is made of, and how it is run.*
>
> *I believe in the reality of progress. I—*
>
> *But the whole thing, after all, may be put very simply. I believe that it is better to tell the truth than to lie. I believe that it is better to be free than to be a slave. And I believe that it is better to know than to be ignorant.* ◻

Murray Rothbard, an economist at Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute of New York, is a REASON Viewpoint columnist. This article is reprinted, in shortened form, from the New Individualist Review, July 1962.

"CONSTRAINTS ON GOVERMENT"

Mont Pelerin Society—1980

By Robert Poole, Jr.

PICTURE THE SCENE, if you will: A grand dining room with perhaps 60 tables, each seating 10 people. As you walk across the room to your seat, you rub elbows with Leonard Read, Robert Chitester, George Stigler, and David Friedman. Off to your left is *Barron's* editor Robert Bleiberg, talking with legendary currency trader Nicholas Deak. At the next table you find columnist John Chamberlain, writer Jude Wanniski, and think-tank founder Antony Fisher. And up on the dais at the head table are William Simon, Rose and Milton Friedman, and a distinguished-looking man who turns out to be Manuel Ayau, president of a free-market university in Guatemala.

You pinch yourself, but the scene refuses to vanish. Similar luminaries are all around—economists, political scientists, institute presidents, foundation administrators, and writers whose reputation has preceded them. What you've encountered is the 23rd general meeting of the Mont Pelerin Society, founded in 1947 by F.A. Hayek. Dedicated to advancing the ideals of a free society, the organization has grown from a handful at its founding to over 400 today, representing over 30 countries. And as the failures of Keynesian economics and the welfare state have become more obvious, the society's free-market views have become increasingly listened to, debated, and in some quarters even accepted.

The theme of this year's meeting, held September 7-13 at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, was "Constraints on Government." The various sessions were devoted to such topics as:

- Can monetary policy make a difference?
- Denationalization and deregulation
- International migration
- The underground economy
- Do conservative governments make a difference?
- Limits on taxation
- How can government be restricted?

Some of these sessions led to spirited exchanges of views. David Friedman took to task the two presenters of papers on international migration for not espousing the classical liberal position of open borders. A lively discussion took place over the fact that denationalization and deregulation have gone considerably further in Chile under an enlightened military government than in countries like Australia, Canada, Britain, and the United States, where interest-group democracy has the upper hand. Sir Keith Joseph—Margaret Thatcher's industries minister—came under fire for the cautious pace of British denationalization.

In several of the sessions the divergence between conservative, classical liberal, and libertarian strains of thought became evident. On the underground economy, for example, some discussants seemed uneasy with the fact that people are engaging in wholesale tax evasion by such activities; others seemed delighted by it. Italian Antonio Martino called that country's underground economy "another Italian economic miracle" and Sweden's Sven Rydenfelt called it a resistance movement striking back at the repressive nature of his country's welfare state. Similar tensions—generally between older, more conservative participants and younger, more libertarian ones—were evident over immigration policy.

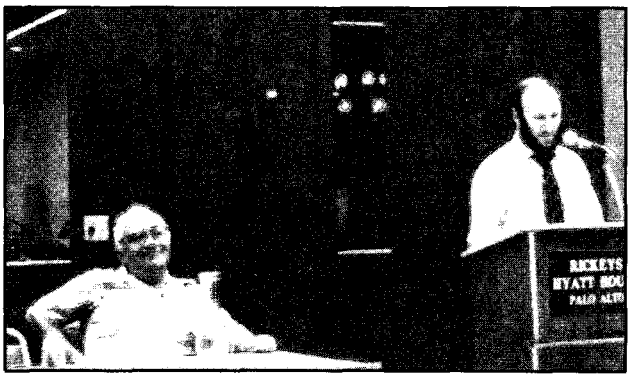
One of the most exciting aspects of the conference was its international nature. Achieving a free society is ob-

viously of concern to writers and scholars in Europe, Latin America, South Africa, Australia, and Canada, as much as it is in the United States. The first-time observer was delighted to see the large contingent from Japan (complete with simultaneous translation services) and to learn of the Japanese success in dramatically reducing inflation by controlling the money supply. One learned firsthand about the deregulation of broadcasting in Italy, the wave of nationalizations in Sweden since a "conservative" government took over five years ago, the fact that a totally unregulated electric company had served Caracas, Venezuela, until this year (when regulation was introduced despite a history of declining prices), and about the complete deregulation of taxis and jitneys in Chile.

REASON was well represented at the meeting. From abroad came foreign correspondents Leon Louw (South Africa), Ole-Jacob Hoff (Norway), Michael van Notten (Holland), Joachim Maitre (Germany), and Fernando Linares (Guatemala). Also present were contributing editors Henry Manne, Alan Reynolds, and Murray Rothbard, senior editors Klausner and Machan, and this writer.

As was the case two years ago, libertarians from around the world got together one evening to bring each other up to date on the status of liberty in their countries. Organized by Murray Rothbard, the meeting heard reports from South Africa, England, Australia, Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Guatemala, Argentina, Iceland, and Canada, as well as the United States. The most optimistic report, surprisingly, was Leon Louw's from South Africa, where the Free Market Foundation is having a significant impact. Chris Tame reported on the success of his libertarian bookstore in London but cautioned against expecting very much from the Thatcher government. The delegate from Iceland told of an ambitious program of translating books by people such as Hayek and Friedman.

All in all, the tenor of the meeting was far more optimistic than that of the Hong Kong meeting two years ago ("Meeting of the [Free] Minds," REASON, December 1978). While the speakers were generally disappointed in the efforts of conservative governments to give more than lip service to rolling back Leviathan, the emphasis on such topics as deregulation, denationalization, tax limitation, and the underground economy reflected the direction in which the tide seems to be running: away from statism. In the final day's session Milton Friedman discussed the "economic bill of rights" proposed in his book *Free to Choose*. Pointing out that such constitutional changes could not *guarantee* freedom, he reminded the group that the process of arguing for and enacting such amendments would contribute to the *intellectual* battle needed to achieve a free society.



Above: Mont Pelerin Society members and guests crowd into a lecture hall at the Hoover Institution.

Left: Murray Rothbard and Walter Block take part in a meeting of international libertarians.

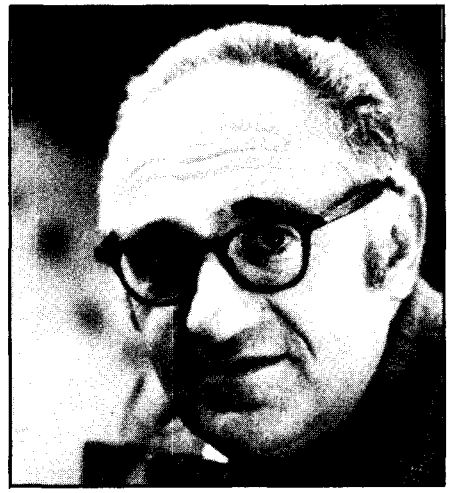
Responding to Friedman (and to a paper by F.A. Hayek, who could not be present due to illness), Thomas Sowell made a stirring case for developing a *moral vision* of a free society, rather than relying solely on economic arguments. The liberal left has such a vision, he reminded us, and has been promoting it for generations. You can't successfully fight rent control or minimum wage laws, for example, strictly on a case-by-case basis, he maintained: "It takes a vision to beat a vision. Fighting issue-by-issue is the equivalent of getting bogged down in a land war in Asia." Thus, Sowell is not as optimistic as Friedman about the value of piecemeal constitutional changes.

The closing banquet capped the week's events, which included, in addition to the many formal discussions, frequent occasions for informal camaraderie. Outgoing president Ayau surprised and delighted the group by singing an original song ("Is It True What They Say about Planning?"). The new president, Chiaki Nishiyama of Japan, was introduced by Milton Friedman. Nishiyama received his Ph.D. at Chicago under Hayek and participated in Friedman's money and banking workshop there. He has gone on to become one of the leading free-market advocates in Japan. His election symbolizes the fact that the movement for freedom is truly worldwide. And the Mont Pelerin Society's growth should give us all a ray of hope for the future of freedom everywhere. ◻

Robert Poole is the editor of REASON *and the author, most recently, of* Cutting Back City Hall *(Universe Books).*

From Cuban to American Socialism

viewpoint



Murray N. Rothbard

Americans like to point to a crucial difference between a free and a despotic country: that free countries allow their citizens to leave, while tyrannical regimes throw an iron curtain around their borders and refuse to let their people go. Communist countries fence their peoples in; America allows its citizens to leave. Thousands clamor to get out of Russia or Cuba or Vietnam, while no one rushes to apply for citizenship in these alleged examples of workers' paradise.

Fair enough, and a good point as far as it goes. But curiously, the yearning masses seeking freedom from Communist countries get an all too chilly reception when they seek freedom and prosperity by entering the Land of the Free. If there is not exactly an iron curtain keeping these freedom-seekers out, there is at best grudging assent and at worst severe restrictions upon these would-be immigrants. The pitiful and truly heroic Vietnamese boat people were scarcely welcomed with open arms in the United States; in fact, Hanoi was blamed for allowing an excessive and disorderly flow of refugees from its shores.

The same anomaly occurred last April, when the Cuban regime began to allow tens of thousands of freedom-seekers to leave Cuba and emigrate to the United States. Once again, instead of hailing this relaxation of the Cuban Curtain and welcoming the refugees, Castro was denounced for "dumping" undesirables, prisoners, and mental patients upon us, and the US government began to arrest private boat owners for conducting the Cubans to freedom. A strange welcome indeed!

The Cubans who were allowed into the United States, moreover, were not simply allowed to immigrate, get a job, and blend into the American population. Instead, they have been herded into literal concentration camps under military rule, where they must stay until mountains of red tape are processed and until someone can be induced to vouch for each immigrant. Only then are they allowed to leave. In the meanwhile, the Cubans are suffering under our own home-grown brand of socialism. They are subject to the brutal or uncaring rule of Army personnel, very few of whom can speak Spanish. One experienced federal public health official states that health facilities at the camp at Fort Indiantown Gap, in Pennsylvania, are the "worst I've ever seen." Mary Horst, an educator who worked all summer at Indiantown, reports that the majority of peaceful Cubans are incarcerated and put at the mercy of a minority of Cuban "mafia," who are allowed to rule the compounds. "It's become a concentration camp," she pointed out. "I hate to use that term, but that's what has evolved."

The Cubans have been particularly brutalized by the officers of the Federal Protective Service, the law enforcement agency delegated to police the Cuban camps. A federal health official charges that the FPS officers, few of whom speak Spanish, hate the Cubans and "will beat them, do anything, without reason."

The Cuban immigrants are not eligible for welfare and are generally willing to take any job that might come their way. But in order to get a job, to resume normal life, they have to be able to get out of the camps; and this, not enough have been able to do. There have been many suicide attempts among the 15,000 Cubans still incarcerated in the camps, but these have been brusquely dismissed by the American authorities as "attention-getting gestures." One wonders how the lordly camp officials and FPS officers would like it if the shoe were on the other foot, and *they* were the ones kept prisoner in the camps.

There have been riots in the camps, and much of the cause has been cultural, with the American authorities simply failing to understand Cuban mores. Thus, the Americans insisted on keeping the windows barred, which prevented the Cubans from calling to each other from the windows. And, when the Cubans, who are night people, tried in frustration to cook chicken at night over a fire—the camp kitchen being closed early in the evening—they were busted for daring to have an open fire in the camp. In both cases, riots ensued.

It all boils down to this: In all the talk about freedom to leave or to enter, are we really interested in freedom, justice, and humanity, or are we only interested in scoring Brownie points in the Cold War game? If the former, we should not merely be content to condemn Russia or Cuba for not letting their people go; we should hail any occasion when some of their people *do* go, and we should welcome all of them to our shores with good fellowship and open arms. If we truly wish to be the land of the free, we must return to the traditional American policy before World War I of welcoming immigrants, of lifting our lamp by the golden door. America was built by immigrants, and we lost a good deal of our soul when the lamp nearly went out after World War I, and immigration was sharply restricted by a combination of racism and labor union restrictionism. Let us return to our own noble heritage and be the beacon-light of freedom once more.

Murray Rothbard is a professor of economics at Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute of New York and the author of numerous articles and books on economics, history, and the libertarian movement.

LUCIFER'S LEXICON

by L. A. Rollins

cult, *n. Any religious group whose members are considered fair game by Ted Patrick.*

just war, *n. Merely war.*

legislate morality, *v.t. Legislate.*

propaganda, *n. Communication; for example, this definition.*

right-to-work law, *n. A no-right-to-work-in-a-closed-shop law.*

riot, *n. A natural disaster necessitating federal relief.*

spotlight

South African Individualist

By Patrick Cox

It is possible that in the past decade no country has moved further toward a libertarian society than South Africa has. Yes—South Africa. And much of the credit can be chalked up to a group of libertarians who have used almost clandestine techniques to achieve impressive ends. Leon Louw (low), a 32-year-old lawyer (jurist), a founder and the director of the Free Market Foundation, is at the center of the individualist conspiracy.

This Afrikaaner, descended from Dutch Louws who settled in Africa in 1654, says: "We work like the Fabian society. Historically, they have outwitted every capitalist, every free-marketeer, everywhere. Their weapons work, so we fight them with their own weapons. We infiltrate, we work behind the scenes, we reach opinion leaders. We disseminate literature, sometimes anonymously, sometimes with a suitable introduction through suitable channels. Our target market is the top people; we aim right at the top. We've taken the view that we can't reach the general public, and even if we could, it's not clear that it is the short-cut way to bring about real change. We've gone right at the cabinet ministers, at the popular leaders, the business leaders, the academic leaders, and the leading jurists."

There is a good deal of evidence to support the claim that such tactics are meeting with success. In the last three years, each successive South African budget has been a smaller percentage of the GNP there. Real tax rates have been reduced successively, and the country is moving away from all direct taxes. Foreign exchange has been completely deregulated, and central bank intervention has been decreased. The number of government departments has been cut from 44 to 18. Price and rent controls have been abolished, and transport laws are being phased out. Black trading restrictions have been removed, migration laws have been relaxed, segregationist public accommodation laws have been reduced significantly, and rights to property ownership are being extended to blacks. Economic deregulation has even helped the cheetah and other endangered species, which are on their way back following denationalization of wildlife and parks. Louw points out that all this has been accomplished without overthrowing the government or running an election.

Nowhere in the world is the distinction between "right-wing" and "libertarian" so evident. Many South Africans are aware of Louw only as a crusader for civil and economic liberties for blacks, who make up 70 percent of South Africa's population. Conditions for blacks have been improving dramatically but "not fast enough," says Louw. "I'm an abolitionist. What's wrong is wrong. Freedom is the first principle. You cannot justify restrictions by saying there will be uncomfortable effects during the process of change."

Leon Louw

Black economist Walter Williams, who has visited South Africa extensively, says of Louw and the South African move toward a nonstatist society, "If you had to pick somebody on the continent that played a significant role, surely it would be Leon and the Free Market Foundation." The Foundation, says Williams, "is forcing people to view the problems of apartheid." Laughing, he points out that the American press reports that blacks aren't free in South Africa but ignores the fact that whites aren't either as long as the government regulates the telephone industry and controls economic activity. Louw is fighting for liberty for people, not blacks or whites.

An impressive measure of Louw's and the Free Market Foundation's influence is a list of its present friends and members. Since its inception in 1975 it has brought into the fold the head of the powerful South African government-funded consumer union, who has resigned and, with Leon Louw, is forming a profit-making consumer organization because of his new philosophical objections to the use of tax money for his purposes. The most powerful labor union leader in South Africa has started working with Louw and the Foundation and has come out against racially segregated unions and closed shop laws (a barrier to black employment).

Two of the three recognized black leaders in South Africa are now participating in Foundation activities. The powerful Chief Buthelezi said a few years ago: "Free enterprise is the black's only hope." Dr. Motlana, the other black leader, who has been described as a socialist by the American press, is forming the Soweto Committee for Economic Freedom, which will be formed and financed entirely by blacks—"One of the most exciting developments in some time," Louw calmly understates in the Queen's English. "I have him reading Robert Nozick and Murray Rothbard." You get the impression that the third black leader would be coming around to libertarianism, too, if he could get out of prison long enough for Louw to talk to him.

Black business leaders, Jewish business leaders, politicians, civil servants, people from the entire spectrum of South African life, are involved in Foundation work and its publication, *The Free Market.* It's comparable, notes Louw, to having Ralph Nader, George Meaney, and David Rockefeller on REASON's list of contributing editors and arguing about the best way to get rid of the government.

Other Foundation publications include *Die Individualis,* Afrikaans for "The Individualist," an out-and-out libertarian newsletter, and Fred Macaskill's *In Search of Liberty,* the first South African book on libertarianism. Another book published under the auspices of the Foundation is Ad Wassenaar's *Assault on Private Enterprise,* a book that so enraged South African statists that, when it came out a few years ago, former Prime Minister John Vorster spent half an hour in parliament attacking Wassenaar and his ideas.

Louw's friends admit that he is in some danger. Professor J. A. Lombard, a founding member of the Foundation and the country's leading economist, has been the target of one unsuccessful bombing. The bombers could have been radical leftists or rightists, but Louw says his biggest enemies are not Marxists, who are rela-

tively easy to deal with once the issue of coercion is put on the table. The real enemies are those who say, "I am a capitalist, and in a capitalist society, you have to control morals. These are the most poisonous enemies," says Louw, because they say they're for free enterprise or freedom or libertarianism, but they're not.

Louw's wife, Frances, has just completed a book on the applications of individualism to child rearing. The couple and their children live in Johannesburg.

Louw is quick to admit that his country has a long way to go, but after meeting South Africans like him and his wife and observing trends in the United States, I have been wondering... How hard is it to get South African citizenship?

Patrick Cox is a free-lance writer.

money

Exploiting Foreign Securities

By Steven K. Beckner

Anyone familiar with the plethora of tax and regulatory policies that beset American business should not be surprised with the so-so performance of US securities. There are still good profits to be made in American stocks for the astute, selective trader. But as a general proposition, it is discouraging to think that the recent Dow Jones Industrial peak of 970 was well below the index's all-time high of 1051 set in 1973—despite the overall inflation of the intervening years.

Fortunately, you need not restrict yourself to the vagaries of the US securities markets. A growing number of savvy investors, while they are not prepared to abandon the US markets with all their diversity and liquidity, are realizing that there are other markets around the world from which to choose.

Over the past decade, the US securities market has been among the world's worst in terms of both capital appreciation and dividends. Today's historically low price/earnings ratios are evidence of this dismal record. Of course, relatively low stock prices can be seen as great buy opportunities, but only if you are optimistic about the course of government policy and of the American economy.

Realistically, it makes sense to look for more action abroad. One of the most dramatic cases in point at the moment is the Japanese stock market. The Nikkei (the Japanese version of the Dow) stood at 6000 as recently as 1978, but was rapidly moving toward 7000 as this was written. And some observers foresee the index hitting 10,000 within a year.

The reason is that, despite its enormous dependence on foreign oil and resistance to its exports, Japan has experienced a resurgence in its trade performance, while keeping inflation under control. As a result, there has been a strong inflow of petrodollars into high-yielding Japanese investments. Simultaneously, holders of Japanese securities have experienced a new surge in the value of the yen in which they are denominated.

Hong Kong has been the scene of another hot market. Stocks there have risen nearly 650 percent over the past decade, versus less than 17 percent for US stocks. Other exciting performers this year include France—the Indicateur de Tendance index of the Paris Bourse has gone from 96 to 119 since January—Mexico, and Australia.

It is hard to generalize about why foreign markets have been outperforming those of the United States. The important thing to recognize is that foreign markets follow US markets less and less closely. So when US stocks are in a slump, chances are you'll be able to find a healthy market elsewhere.

Aside from the countercyclical element, there are other good reasons to consider foreign securities. For instance, while it is validly argued that many foreign markets are less liquid (that is, harder to buy and sell in), this also carries advantages for those who are prepared to exploit them. For one thing, the stock of a foreign company will often sell at a lower price than the stock of a comparable American company—because of lower demand. For another, as Brian Toohey of the *Australian Financial Review* notes, the thinness of foreign markets often means that "it doesn't take much foreign interest to make it really take off."

Still another reason to consider foreign securities is the need for diversifying a portfolio. In some industries, of course, there simply are no respectable American stocks to choose from—for instance, in diamonds. But even where American companies are well-represented, it seems imprudent to ignore foreign alternatives.

"A security analyst or portfolio manager... is not doing his homework if he ignores Siemens, Hitachi or Philips in the electrical industrial; Sony and Pioneer in consumer electronics; L'Oreal in cosmetics; Petrofina in petroleum; Michelin in tires and rubber; Carrefour in retailing; Carlsberg-Tuborg and Heineken among breweries; Swissair among airlines; and Unilever, Ciba-Geigy, and a host of others among multinationals," writes Rainer Esslen in his *Complete Book of International Investing.*

Then too, investing in foreign securities can be a good way to diversify into other currencies. Most people who buy foreign securities don't get involved in currency transactions directly. After all, most major foreign companies' shares are listed in the United States as American Depository Receipts (ADRs). Or you can buy shares in a foreign stock mutual fund traded here—for example, Scudder, or Templeton World, or Japan Funds. All these are traded in dollars.

If you decide to trade on the foreign market, using the international department of an American broker, chances are you'll be making the transaction in dollars here, with the actual currency conversion being made at the point of sale abroad. Even so, if you buy a Swiss stock and the Swiss franc rises against the dollar, when you sell the stock, the francs in which it is quoted abroad will exchange for more dollars.

Another approach is to trade directly through a foreign bank, drawing on foreign currency deposits to invest on overseas exchanges. Communications, however, become a problem for the active trader; a discretionary portfolio management program or, alternatively, shares in a foreign-based mutual fund or unit trust might make more sense.

The watchwords, in any event, are global flexibility for the '80s.

Steve Beckner is a free-lance financial writer, the editor of Deaknews, *and the author of* The Hard Money Book.

Do you have an investment question? Mr. Beckner may have the answer. Send your query along to REASON Money, Box 40105, Santa Barbara, CA 93103.

(A limited number of reader questions can be answered in print; personal replies cannot be made.)

arts & letters

movies

- **The Stunt Man**
- **Prom Night**
- **He Knows You're Alone**
- **The Island**

Reviewed by John Hospers

• The main thrust of a film is usually evident in the first few minutes, and never more so than with 1980's low-quality stuff. Not so with **THE STUNT MAN,** a work of considerable subtlety that does not easily yield its multiple layers of meaning to an audience. There may be a few scenes that are unduly melodramatic and a couple of others that remain puzzling even after the film is over, but it appears that writer-director-producer Richard Rush has tried with great success not to be obvious. The language uttered by Peter O'Toole is not only literate but Shakespearean in its complexity and density, so that one would have to see the film again to take in its full meaning; much of it is way above the level of a popcorn audience, but that didn't deter the director from keeping it in. Instead of insulting the intelligence of an audience, he titillates and challenges it.

Nothing is quite what it appears to be at first. A man (Steve Railsback) is escaping from the law. He runs across a rickety bridge and is almost run over by a man driving a shining Duesenberg. But the Duesenberg suddenly disappears, presumably in the water, and instead there appears a helicopter. The terrorized fugitive fears that he's going to be accused of the murder of the disappearing man, but the man in the helicopter, who seems to sense every possibility before it happens, sees the fugitive's handcuffs and conceives a plan: disguise him as a stunt man so that he, the movie director (O'Toole), who has just filmed the scene with the Duesenberg, can use him to finish his picture. And so we have one of the most original films about the making of films, set in a context that isn't about films at all. Though Railsback is excellent and takes up more footage, the film belongs to O'Toole for the sustained high energy with which he delivers his quite extraordinary lines.

The film is jolly, yet also serious. It is a puzzle intricately put together, its storyline both subtle and unpredictable. Its theme remains somewhat mysterious; Rush says it is about "inventing and believing in limited views of the truth." But a dozen other themes could be as plausibly assigned to it, and while those so inclined may speculate about what its "real meaning" is, those who have come to see another slapstick comedy may come away having their minds teased, even jolted a bit.

• **PROM NIGHT** promises to be another exercise in terror and suspense. What it delivers is the most cliché-ridden, ineptly handled story of its kind in a long time—amateurishly acted, with maddening pacing and rhythm, huge holes in the plot, and an ending that is enough to mystify even an ardent champion of senseless mystery-mongering. This time around the villain wields a huge axe. An axe is what should have been used to cut the celluloid into little pieces so that no one would ever have to suffer the indignity of sitting through this stupid picture.

Yet it is almost delightful compared with its immediate successor in the same genre, **HE KNOWS YOU'RE ALONE.** This one is so bad that it doesn't even deserve nasty words to be wasted on it. Maybe if nothing is said about it, it will just quietly go away.

• Any film with the word *island* in the title is apt to trigger associations of romance and adventure. But not when the film is entitled simply **THE ISLAND.** This one contains more blood and gore even than the rest of the summer fare, as if determined to shock even those who, through overexposure, have been immunized to it.

As a solution to the old Bermuda Triangle puzzle, it won't really wash. That a group of pirates from the 17th century could have held out there, capturing boats and killing those aboard, and remaining undetected through all this for three centuries, has about zero probability. Still, if one is willing to suspend disbelief about all this and doesn't mind the copious servings of blood, this isn't such a bad yarn. It has quite a bit of tension and some scary moments. Michael Caine displays his usual aplomb, and the scenes involving the brainwashing of his son are well enough done, though the son's conversion to the cult is a bit too quick for credibility. Actually, it's a story that would be very exciting to children, but because of the constant depiction of murder and pillage it is hardly the kind of film that children (at any rate most children) should see—and thus the film must be rated unsuitable for both groups. The only thing in it that *is* suitable for both is the rousing background music of Richard Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben,* of which one can buy a recording for less than the cost of seeing the picture.

John Hospers is a professor of philosophy at the University of Southern California. His special interest is the area of aesthetics.

Coming Attractions

• **Top Secret:** The electronic age is upon us, which means there's a growing demand for unbreakable codes. But a little-known government agency is trying to keep a lock on such codes. The plum? That way, it can "listen in" wherever it wants.

• **Free-market Editor:** In a free-wheeling interview, Robert Bleiberg, the editor of *Barron's,* discusses journalists' economic illiteracy, reveals how he unlearned 1940s' college economics, and offers some financial predictions.

• **Cars, Banks, Drugs, and Pajamas:** An economist poses the ultimate consumer question—How can we protect ourselves from the consumer protectors?

• **Reporting Dissent:** Soviet dissenters go to heart-breaking lengths to get their stories to the Western world, but very few are publicized by the media. Walter Parchomenko details some cases in point.

Plus: Viewpoints from Alan Reynolds and Jim Davidson, movie reviews from John Hospers, and all of Reason's regular features.

language

The Necks and Minds of the People

By Richard Mitchell

This fall in Belgrade, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization met to blather about the report of its commission on "the news media." That report suggests, among other outrages, that the press ought to promote, and perhaps ought to be *required* to promote, the "social, cultural, economic and political goals set by governments." We're not the least bit surprised. That's exactly the kind of idea you can expect from an outfit calling itself "educational."

"Education" once meant liberation, a condition available to those led forth (*educati*) out of some restraint or captivity. We once assumed that ignorance and unreason, although natural, were fetters that might be broken through the accumulation of knowledge and the practice of logical thought. We imagined that this trap of reflexive twitches might be transformed into the examined life.

Now it is otherwise, and "education" can be best understood as an inoculation, which, if it takes, will protect you from something much worse: *re*education. But it usually takes. Where once a tyrant had to wish that his subjects had but one common neck that he might strangle them all at once, all he has to do now is to "educate the people" so that they will have but one common mind to delude.

Even in its less malevolent forms, education has become a process intended not to increase knowledge and foster thought but to engender feelings. Sellers see no absurdity in claiming to "educate" buyers. Politicians are eager to "educate" voters. And our schools have taken up institutionalized apologetics in the cause of values clarification and social adjustment through consciousness raising. In short, American public education is *exactly* what UNESCO wants us to promote, one of those "social, cultural, economic and political goals set by government." We decline.

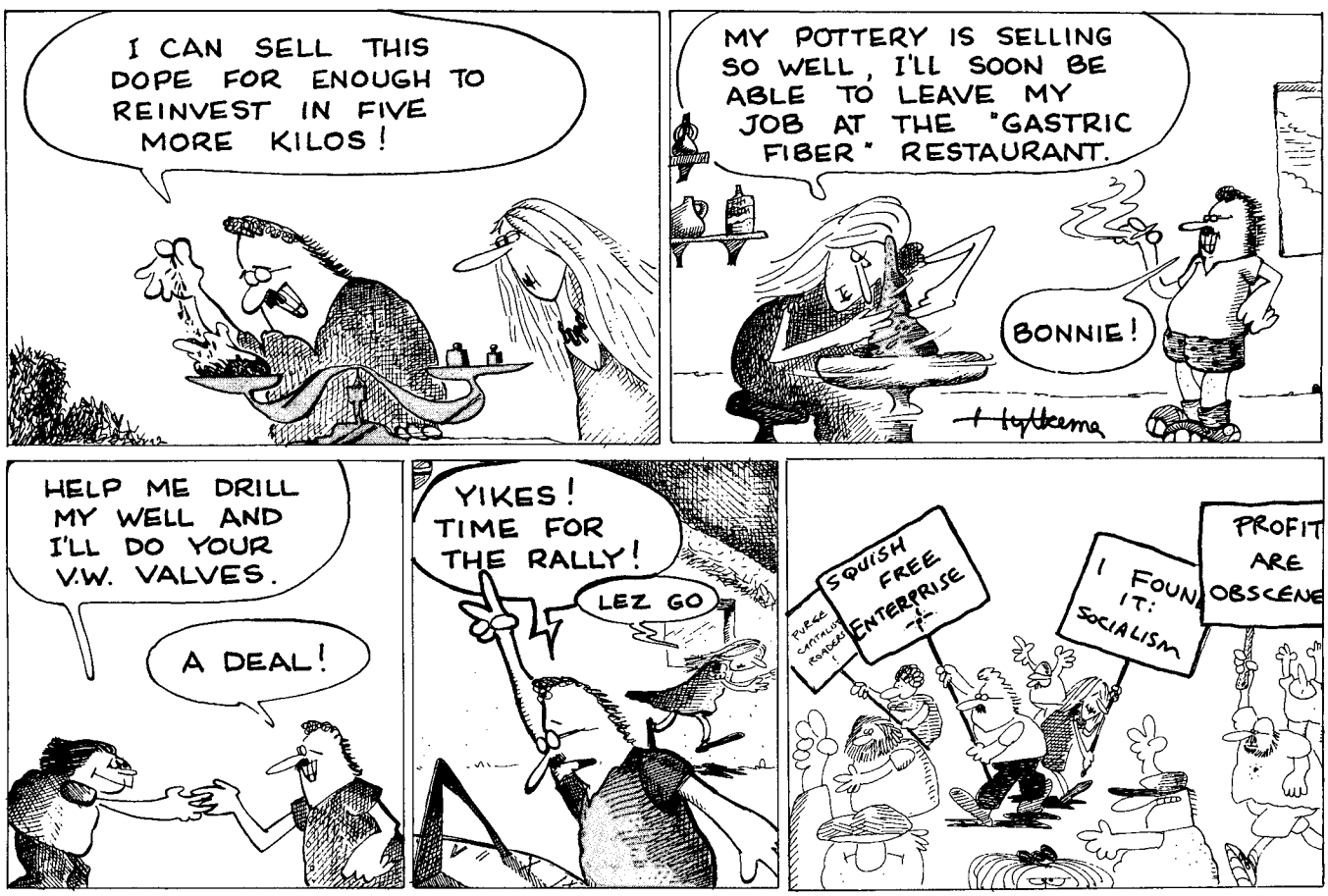
We hear noises from educationists, and especially from unionists in education, about the "duty" of the press to stop knocking and start boosting, by running, perhaps, some cheery articles about boldly innovative (relevant) bulletin boards and the latest test scores, which *may* suggest that many 11th graders are now only *three* years behind in reading. Now is the time, we hear, to "restore public confidence in the schools." That invitation is the same as UNESCO's, and, considering its source, nakedly self-serving as *well* as ominous. Again, we decline.

Public education, no less than the Marine Corps or the Internal Revenue Service, is a creature of government and an instrument of its policies. Its meager remnant of "civilian control," the elected school board, has been effectively disenfranchized by the mandates of government, which leave little uncontrolled. Public education serves one master, and that master is rich and powerful.

Those who clamor for the restoration of confidence in the public schools can, with the mighty resources at their disposal—and not money alone, but the power and prestige of officialdom—easily

rudebarbs

Randall K. Hylkema


I CAN SELL THIS DOPE FOR ENOUGH TO REINVEST IN FIVE MORE KILOS!
MY POTTERY IS SELLING SO WELL, I'LL SOON BE ABLE TO LEAVE MY JOB AT THE "GASTRIC FIBER" RESTAURANT.
BONNIE!
Hylkema
HELP ME DRILL MY WELL AND I'LL DO YOUR V.W. VALVES.
A DEAL!
YIKES! TIME FOR THE RALLY!
LEZ GO
SQUISH FREE ENTERPRISE
PURGE CAPITALIST ROADERS!
I FOUND IT: SOCIALISM
PROFITS ARE OBSCENE

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provide that for themselves. They can easily "educate the public" into warm feelings of respect for the schools, especially since those whose values stand in need of clarification are mostly victims of the schools, unskilled in thought and poor in knowledge. When they do that—indeed, *as* they do that, for they are always at it in one way or another—it is only the press that can put weights in the other pan of the scale, citing facts and exploring meanings.

Governments must provide themselves with a citizenry in whom the skills of language are not good enough to penetrate the defense of the indefensible.

"The functionaries of every government," wrote Jefferson, "have propensities to command at will—for the liberty and property of their constituents." Is that any less true when the "functionaries of government" just happen to be bureaucrats in some department of "education"? Have they not commanded our property, in countless billions, only to squander it on fads and gimmicks and nonsensical "research" and lucrative consultancies for others of their tribe? Have they not commanded our liberty and our very persons in the cause of ideological adjustment? How long would we bear such intrusive and manipulative behavior in other functionaries of government—in the Coast Guard, for example, or the Motor Vehicle Bureau?

How long? Only so long as we remain ignorant of what they are doing and thoughtlessly uncritical about its meaning. Jefferson went on: "There is no safe deposit for them [liberty and property] but with the people themselves; nor can they be safe with them without information. Where the press is free, and every man able to read, all is secure." It is noteworthy that the people who want the press to promote the schools, thus mitigating the first of Jefferson's conditions for the security of all, are the very ones who have so egregiously failed to provide the second, universal literacy.

On the other hand, of course, Lenin opposed freedom of the press. Why, he asked, should government that is "doing what it believes is right allow itself to be criticized?" *His* values were clarified.

And here's the beast that lies in wait for those whose schools have become agents of the State and promoters of the "goals set by government." The generalissimos who run Argentina have banned the study of the new math. *Extra,* an Argentinian journal doing exactly what UNESCO would have us all do, explains that "modern mathematics introduces procedures distinct from those taught by Aristotle.... this encourages doubts about his logic and promotes a lack of confidence in the authority of traditional ruling figures, thus favoring subversion."

Extra also pointed out that certain words used in the new math—for example, *vector, matrix,* and *set*—are typical of Marxist ideology. How long do you suppose it will take those generalissimos to discern the Red Threat in air traffic control, type founding, and tennis?

All governments, and especially tyrannical governments, worry a lot about language. Not only must they "defend the indefensible," as Orwell put it, but they must also provide themselves with a citizenry in whom the skills of language are not good enough to penetrate that defense. When they can, as in Argentina, governments diminish the power of language by fiat; but when they can't their best hope is an established educational system in which it is a policy *not* to worry about language.

We are a long, long way from tyranny, but from here, on a clear day, you *can* see the path.

Richard Mitchell is the author of Less Than Words Can Say *and the publisher of the* Underground Grammarian, *from which this column is adapted.*

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letters

(Continued from p. 14.)

from the standpoint of continuity, to show Margolin, in the very next scene following the "murder," opening her eyes, head on pillow, in her N.Y. apartment). I can't deny that what Mr. Amidon says is true; when one is being broadsided by stylistic chaos at the expense of clarity, one is likely to miss a few points, and when one is discussing such a mess as *Last Embrace,* such points as he raises become *minutia* not worth another breath of worry.

Finally, one should have thought that *Last Embrace* was indefensible as a work of art in any respect; what outraged me was the fact that the director paid far more attention to his plagiarisms than he did his plot. Curiously, Mr. Amidon has nothing to say on this matter.

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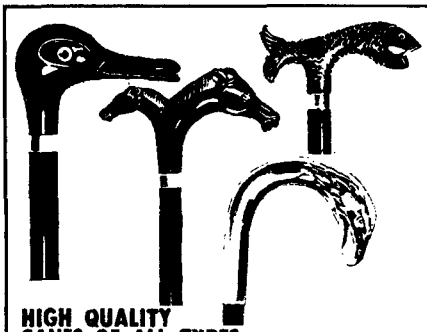

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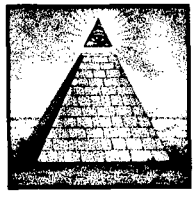

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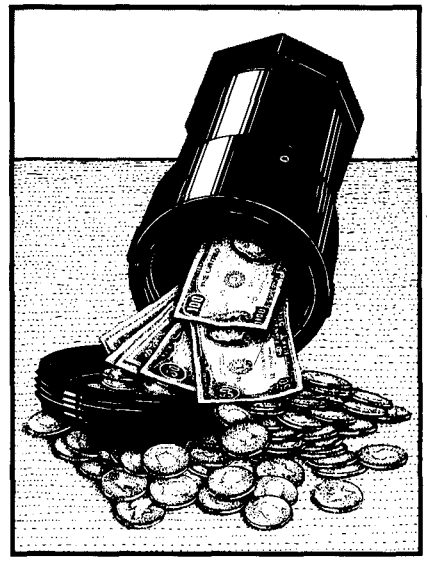

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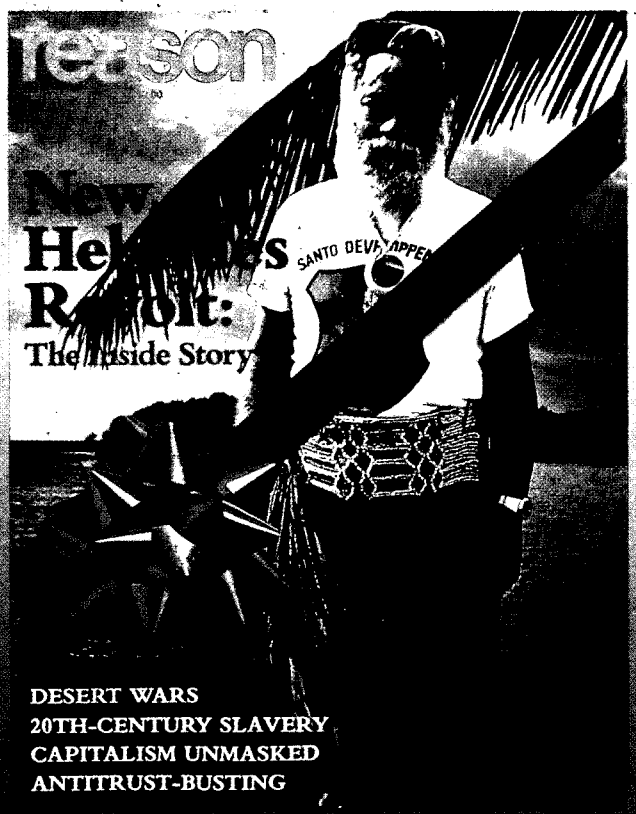

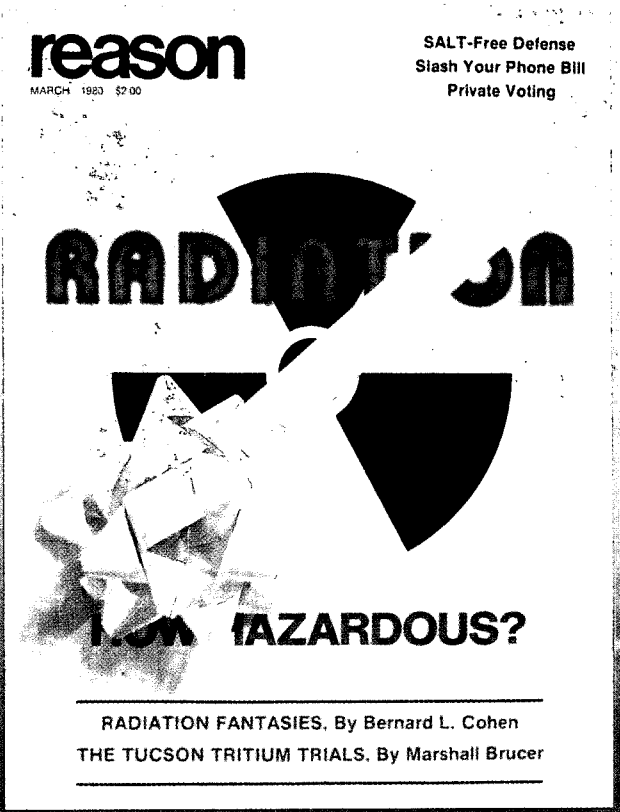

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